The WESTMINSTER YOUNG PEOPLE'S QUARTERLY

International Uniform Lessons

July, August, September, 1924

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Publication Department
Board of Christian Education of the
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Order of Service for Third Quarter, 1924[1]

LEADER RISES—DOORS CLOSED FOR SILENCE.

OPENING SENTENCES:

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path."

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
Wondrous things out of thy law."

INVOCATION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

DOORS OPENED.

PRAISE HYMN.—(All standing.) The following hymns from "Alleluia" are suggested—Numbers 41, 40, 170, 182, 7, 20, 191, 292, 175, 126, 50, 118, 99.

DEVOTIONAL READING OR LESSON TEXT.

PRAYER.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL MESSAGES.

LESSON HYMN.—(All standing.) The following hymns from "Alleluia" are suggested—Numbers 36, 45, 257, 259, 227, 83, 205, 162, 91, 128, 42, 154, 148.

THE LESSON PERIOD, with Offerings and Records.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND OFFERINGS (with prayer).

CONSECRATION HYMN.—(All standing.) "Alleluia," Numbers 43, 217, 186, 237, 46, 79, 189, 164, 174, 129, 158, 172, 169.

BENEDICTION AND SILENT PRAYER.

SIGNAL FOR DISMISSAL (Organ or piano chord).

NOTE.—The suggested hymns are from "Alleluia," published by our Board, and are chosen because they bear upon the lesson of the day, if used in the order given.

[1] Extra copies of this Order of Service, on heavy paper, may be ordered of the publishers at 50 cents a hundred.

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Y. P.

The Westminster Young People's Quarterly

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WHY SHOULD A CLASS BE ORGANIZED?

BY FRANK D. GETTY

In church circles as well as in other realms we are at last awakening to the fact that young people have unused powers which may profitably be called upon. The newly manifested ability of young people to carry responsibility and to perform well tasks assigned to them is one of the reasons for this awakening. The organization of young people's classes in the Sunday school is one of the ways by which we can enlist the powers of the young people and by which we can place definite responsibilities on definite individuals.

Long ago it was made evident that the class should have more of a program than one meeting on Sunday, lasting approximately one hour, in which the main activity was the teaching of a lesson. In addition to the teaching of a lesson and the preparation which should naturally be involved, there should be a program which calls for week-day activity and which includes a variety of work. This extra work should not be considered as part of the task of the teacher. Under the leadership of class officers and class committees, all the members should be enlisted in the church, school, and class activities.

There are times when the class will want to conduct social activities, sometimes for their own members and sometimes for other classes or larger groups of the school. Instead of expecting the teacher to make all the arrangements and to do all the promoting, the Social Committee should assume responsibility, and, in consultation with the teacher, work out the necessary plans. This same method should be employed in the matter of securing new members. A permanent Membership Committee in the class would tend to make the securing of new members a constant and regular matter. One of the best ways of insuring class increase is to see that each member of the class is actively engaged in some definite Christian service. Here again the activities of the committee are needed to find opportunities for service and to secure the necessary action on the part of the members.

The failure to have a large number of young people enrolled in the Sunday school might be overcome if the young people felt there was some good reason for maintaining their connection with the

school. A worth-while organized class program which calls for continued activity and which promises future results is often the challenge which is needed to hold the interest of the young people who might otherwise drift away. Further argument for the organization of a young people's class is that it calls for coöperative effort, and there is always a certain amount of enthusiasm created when young people work together. It also tends to have the young people think in terms of "their" class rather than of "the teacher's" class, which in turn results in thinking of the school as "their" school. The encouragement of this idea, that both the school and the class are depending on the individual for success, usually brings good results.

In a future number of the Young People's Quarterly a definite program for an organized class will be presented. Suggestions for procedure in organizing a class can be secured in a leaflet entitled "The Organized Class in the Young People's Division," published by the Department of Home and Church of the Board of Christian Education.

A MISSIONARY PAGEANT

BY JOHN BAILEY KELLY

Lassitude begins to break out at this season of the year, and sometimes becomes violently epidemic in the community. Young people's societies have been known to be badly decimated by such epidemics and sometimes those who survive the disease and remain in the society are so demoralized by the general prevalence of the malady that they lose their grip upon the work in hand. Some sort of tonic should be administered immediately, by way of antitoxin. Why not put on a missionary pageant or play as a means of rallying the flagging interest and staying the ravages of this disease?

A dramatized presentation of the missionary theme, carefully chosen, may well be the climax of the year's program of missionary education. If Japan has been studied during the church school of missions or in the meetings of the young people's society a missionary playlet dealing with Japan would follow up the interest of the mission-study course and help to clinch the nail that has been driven. Two admirable little plays are offered by our Board of Foreign Missions under the titles, "Adoption" and "The Other Point of View." If, on the other hand, home missions was studied, there is a fine new pageant entitled, "America's Unfinished Battles" which may be had from the Board of National Missions. It might be feasible to put on such a pageant out of doors. This would be out of the ordinary, and help to attract attention.

In any case there should be most careful preparation for the play. Missionary dramatics are not primarily designed to show the abilities of individuals upon the stage, but rather to carry a message through the eye as well as the ear concerning the progress of Christ's Kingdom. It is very important that the presentation be projected from this angle, and with this attitude, on the part of all

who participate in it. Those who take part should prepare themselves by prayer and by careful and sympathetic study of the people whom they are trying to represent, in order that they may win the interest and sympathy of those who attend the performance. Undertaken in the right spirit the opportunity of presenting missions through pageantry and dramatics is very much worth while. It is decidedly out of the ordinary, and an entirely fresh approach to the subject is obtained.

THE "LIVE WIRES"

BY MARIAN MAC LEAN FINNEY

Very much alive indeed!

"And what do you do?" asked a visitor to a church in Los Angeles; a visitor who had been charmed by the earnestness of a class of ninteen or twenty high-school girls, each wearing the class colors, crimson and gray.

The president laughed. "It would be easier to tell you what we do not do," she said.

The teacher put an arm around the girl and addressed the questioner. "As a class which is studying 'Heroes of the Faith,' we have to be alert to put our theories into practice. Our motto is: 'Every member a Christian.' Sometimes I think that is not nearly so hard as if we had put it: 'Every member proving that she is a Christian.' Our field is not large, just school and church. We try to win new members for the class from the school, and then make the class count as much as the school in the lives of the girls."

Much of such effort is necessarily social. Is a member going away to college or on a prolonged trip? She is given a farewell party and a letter shower, one letter to be opened each Sunday she is gone, so that she may still be with the class (at least in thought and interest) during the usual meeting hour. Is a new member to be welcomed? There must be the simplest sort of "tea," that she may get acquainted. Does some one long "just to have a good time"? They have a fudge party or something equally enjoyable. Every summer they join with the boys' class of the same age and have a party on the beach, with their teachers and parents as special guests.

But they do much more than play. Does the woman's missionary society resolve to get up a pageant? The "Live Wires" will help to present it. Is the woman's aid society serving a dinner? Some of those twenty girls will be waitresses—or even dishwashers. Is the Sunday-school superintendent distressed because a teacher in the Primary or the Beginners Department has failed to arrive? He knows which class will provide a substitute. And so competent have some of these young teachers proved, that they are never returned to the place from which they were borrowed. In this case they become associate members of the class, with particular honors and

privileges at the class functions. The most vital and sustained interest of the "Live Wires" is the Christian Endeavor Society.

Yet they find time, some way, somehow, to bring cheer to the children's hospital by donations of Sunday-school papers they have collected, and to make a missionary in far-away Japan feel the home touch through the magazines they send and the clever articles their needles produce for a once-a-year box. They even have time to think of themselves, for their classroom is no longer "the horrid old place" provided by a well-meaning but uncomprehending church board. There are rugs and cushions and curtains and framed pictures and a class pennant! It is a classroom which means something to each girl in it, because it is the expression of her own loving thought and skillful work.

Yes, it is easier to enumerate what they do not do. Such a class, when its left hand is finally made aware of what its right is doing, is an inspiration to others who may possibly have overlooked some of these methods of Christian service.

HEROES OF 1924

BY AMOS R. WELLS, LITT.D., LL.D.

That famous French soldier, the Chevalier Bayard, once held a bridge all by himself against two hundred Spanish troops, while the French army retreated. Later, once more his bravery saved the whole army of France. He was fighting against the Italians when a cannon ball struck him and he fell from his horse, terribly wounded. His comrades urged him to leave the battle-field, but he insisted that he never turned his back on a foe; so he got them to prop him up against a tree, and there, as he watched the contest, his lifeblood ebbed away.

Young folks of to-day, as they read these stories, are likely to wish for the good old times when such deeds of heroism were possible; but they are within the reach of every soul in 1924 as much as in 1524, four centuries ago, when Bayard fell so gloriously. Deeds of valor were performed in the World War far surpassing any of the exploits of knights in armor; and, though all the world prays that there may never again be a world war, or a war between nations, yet there will remain enough foes to furnish the fiercest struggles for every person on earth, struggles calling for the most magnificent heroism.

You need to revise your idea of heroism if you think that a hero cannot be found in a public school, or in a shop, or in any home. Heroes (and of course I mean heroines as well) are not made by circumstances or diminished in number by circumstances. Often we have conditions that call loudly for a hero, but no hero appears. Often, again, we have conditions that seem most ordinary, over which some one casts the golden light of lofty courage.

We must not make the mistake, either, of resting our idea of

heroism on the applause of men. Deeds of the greatest heroism are constantly performed and remain unknown to all but God. Here is a faithful mother, holding the bridge of honor for her children against a horrid host of Satanic influences, while the children make their way safely into noble manhood and womanhood. It is an unseen struggle. It never gets into the papers. It wins no *Croix de Guerre,* no Victoria Cross, no Congressional Medal. But Chevalier Bayard himself never waged more heroic warfare than that brave and unknown little woman.

Do not estimate heroism, either, by the number involved; it makes no difference whether an army is concerned, or only a forlorn boy or girl who needs you. Do not reckon in any exterior matter at all, but merely the inner spirit, the spirit of heroism.

The central characteristic of the heroic spirit is forgetfulness of self in thought for some one else or for a noble cause. Two boys have similar opportunities to save the life of a companion who has fallen into the river. One of these argues the matter with himself: "I can swim, I can rescue him, but I'd probably spoil my clothes; yet, on the other hand, if I don't do it they'll despise me, while if I do it they'll all praise me, and maybe give me money for it." So he plunges into the river. The other boy does not stop an instant to think about the matter, but, quick as a flash, he is in the water and striking out after his drowning comrade. To the onlookers both boys are heroes, but only the latter boy really has the heroic spirit; the first boy has the spirit of a bargain-driver.

Which would you rather be—the bargain-driver or the hero?

EATING THE BOOK

BY GILBERT FAIRCHILD

Spurgeon, the great preacher, once picked up an old Bible in a Scottish inn. It was eaten by bookworms, and as Spurgeon held it up to the light he saw that in one place a worm had eaten its way all the way through it, from Genesis to Revelation. "Lord," exclaimed Spurgeon fervently, "make me a bookworm like that!"

The method of that bookworm is the right way to master the Book of books. The Bible itself uses the same graphic comparison, and speaks of feeding on the Word and of eating the sacred leaves. The metaphor suggests, of course, complete absorption. The Bible lover will live on Holy Writ in his soul just as his body lives on bread and meat. It will be milk to babes; it will be strong meat to men.

The first thing that one should do, if one would know the Bible, is to follow the example of Spurgeon's bookworm and read the Book straight through. When I learned surveying, I was taught, before I made a careful plot of a piece of ground with theodolite and chain, to go over it rapidly and roughly, pacing off the sides and taking their directions with a pocket compass. This "preliminary recon-

naissance," when charted, is often found to be surprisingly accurate, and in any case furnishes a fine guide for the more finished work to follow.

Thus in your "preliminary reconnaissance" of the Bible you will go over much ground far too rapidly, since much of it cannot be fairly understood without careful study: but you will gain a comprehensive view of Scripture such as you never had before, you will discover many glorious passages to which you will wish to return, and entire books of the Bible will blaze forth in an unguessed glory.

But that is not "eating" the Bible; that is only glancing over the bill of fare and making up your mind what you will eat first. The eating itself requires thorough mastication to insure perfect digestion, that the food may be well built up into your body.

This eating of the Bible that finally counts is the selection of some portion of it, say the Gospel of Mark or the book of Proverbs. Then it calls for some book that will help you to understand what you read, some full and adequate commentary. For it must be remembered that the Bible is an ancient book, and that many customs have changed since it was written. Moreover, it comes to us from a far-distant land and from another race than ours, so that it is no wonder that it needs some explanation. The marvel is that it needs so little, that it speaks to the heart to-day and to us quite as if it were written yesterday, and in New York or in Chicago.

Then, having read the passage in the best English translation and with the best helps you can obtain, the next step in the eating is meditation. Here is where most Bible readers fail, and failure here means failure of digestion. Without Bible meditation there can be no building up of the great Bible truths into character and life. We need to keep in mind what we have read. We need to ask ourselves what we should learn from these Bible men and women, what warnings they furnish, what noble examples. We need to consider how we can apply the teachings of Scripture to our own lives—what comfort there is in them, what guidance, what encouragement. We need to go to sleep meditating on what we have read. We need to wake up in the morning with our Bible passage fresh in our minds. We need to take it into the new day. It will—be sure of that—serve us gloriously in every test which the day will bring us, and it will carry us safely and prosperously to eventide.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE SUMMER

An Organized Class Question

Why should active, enthusiastic young people count it necessary to drop nearly all class activities and practical service during the summer? Possibly they are following tradition. Sometimes it is wise to break from tradition. Possibly no leader has felt courageous enough to propose a constructive summer program of activities. Possibly the difficulty was uncertainty as to what might be done.

The fact is that there are a good many classes which make much of the opportunity offered in the summer time for activities which keep up the class spirit, provide wholesome sociability, and give opportunity for practical service to others. Space will permit only a limited number of suggestions with brief comments.

The Class and Departmental Social Program

First, there are the outdoor gatherings—the hike with a camp fire at the end of the journey, the lawn social, the social in the park, the automobile party, the canoe party, the launch ride or the boat ride, and so on. Teachers should share these events and plans should be carefully worked out.

Second, there are the summer athletic interests that may be within the class, or the school. For the boys, a baseball team is often possible. For both boys and girls, tennis, outdoor basketball and volley ball are possibilities. If a class or a department is to make a success of athletic activities, some real leadership and effort must be expended. But it is worth the effort in maintaining the class and Sunday-school spirit and in enlisting new members.

The Class and Department Service Program

There are types of service for the local church that may often be adequately handled in summer and not in winter. Not infrequently, the young people give time on long summer evenings to church repairs, renovating rooms, care of lawn, flower beds, sidewalks, hedges, and so on. Individual churches or a small group of churches so located that community activities may be developed by church leaders around the church activities during the summer, will be able to use the young people in many ways. Organized class or Young People's Department groups may launch some community work in a limited way where there is no possibility of attempting it on a large scale. The following may be suggestive: Assist in playground activities, supervise clubs, including athletics for groups of community boys and girls, plan and conduct picnics or park parties, or other outings for neglected children, assist in Daily Vacation Bible School work. Community religious meetings, in parks or on church lawns, offer still another field of service. The success of young people's societies in this work reveals the capacity of young people. Occasionally a place will be found where a community Sunday school could be opened and maintained during the summer months.

A class or a department should recognize that it is not wise to attempt a large number of different things. Nor is it wise to center the efforts of the entire group in just one piece of practical service. There is a sane middle ground. The most important thing of all is that the young people themselves make good use of the summer months in the interests of the church, both for themselves and the service they may render to others.

THE ALPHA'S PRAYER CIRCLE

BY WILLAMETTA PRESTON

Many of the older classes have prayer circles; why feature this? Just because it is unusual; because it has meant so much in the life of the class; because it is or has a circle within a circle. But let one of the Alphas tell you in her own words why it is unusual.

"Why—our Master, the great Teacher, had a prayer circle. He had his twelve disciples who were always with him, learning of him, studying with him. What was that but the first prayer circle? There must have been many other followers—as there are large numbers in our classes—but only a few shared this close companionship. And even in that first circle there was an inner circle. How many times we read of Peter, James, and John! So, in our prayer circle, we have an inner circle—and that's what makes it different."

How does it work, this prayer circle—this inner circle?

The prayer circle meets a half hour before the meeting of the class, to pray for the class definitely—if it has any problems, any difficulties, if any of its members are in trouble or in temptation. Quite a large number attend these prayer circles.

There are just seven in the inner circle, choice, consecrated girls who come together weekly at the home of one or another. They have no set time of meeting (that is hardly possible), but if the meeting is not held before Saturday evening, it is held then. The girls are ready for a telephone call from any one of the seven to meet any emergency and special need of any member of the class. Besides these "unexpecteds," this inner circle has a definite prayer list of all the non-Christian girls in the class. They do not try to pray for all at the same time—but they take one and unite their strength and efforts upon that girl until she is won. They have already "prayed five into the Kingdom." Then, when a new member is proposed for admission to the class, the members of the inner circle have a prayer session that the class may do and be its best. If they try any new work, it is first taken up by this inner circle.

Once, one of their number was almost at the point of death—it seemed that she could not live the night out. A "hurry call" brought this inner circle together and, asking first for faith, they prayed for the recovery of their classmate if it was God's will.

In the morning the crisis was past, and her recovery, though slow, was assured from that hour.

"Have prayer circles in every class," this same Alpha advises, "and be sure to have an inner circle of seven if you can find them; if not, have an inner circle of five, or even of three—for we can always be sure of the Master's presence, as were Peter and James and John."

INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

Lesson I — July 6, 1924

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 11.

TEXT OF LESSON, Luke 2: 7-20.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock.

9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people:

11 For there is born to you this day in the city of Da'vid a Sav'iour, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'le-hem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found both Ma'ry and Jo'seph, and the babe lying in the manger.

17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.

18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds.

19 But Ma'ry kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned,

AUTHORIZED VERSION

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of Da'vid a Sav'iour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'le-hem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Ma'ry, and Jo'seph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Ma'ry kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Time—5 B.C. Place—Bethlehem

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. June 30. Luke 2: 7-14. The Birth of Jesus.
T. July 1. Luke 2: 15-20. The Shepherds See the Child.
W. July 2. Luke 2: 22-32. Jesus Dedicated to God.
T. July 3. Gen. 33: 1-5. Children Are God's Gift.
F. July 4. Psalm 8. Children Glorify God.
S. July 5. John 1: 1-8. Jesus Reveals God.
S. July 6. Isa. 11: 1-5. The Righteous Child.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

We begin with this lesson a study of the life of Christ which is to be continued for nine months. It will be concluded the last Sunday in March, 1925. The lessons will be taken from all four Gospels.

Step by step we will follow Jesus from the day of his birth to the Easter Sunday when he arose from the dead. There is no study more important than this. The life of any great man, such as Lincoln or Washington, cannot be compared in interest with the life of Jesus.

The little volume prepared by Dr. Stalker for students, "The Life of Jesus Christ," is easily read, and contains the complete story of the Gospels. Other great lives have also been written: "The Life and Times of Jesus, the Messiah," by Edersheim; "The Life and Words of Christ," by Geikie; "The Days of His Flesh," by David Smith; "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth," by Rhees; "Outlines of the Life of Christ," by Sanday.

Students in high school and college should possess, if possible, a Harmony of the Gospels which arranges the four Gospels in chronological order in parallel columns. "A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study," by Stevens and Burton, is one of the best.

To Think About: Mr. Moody once asked the question, "What think ye of the Christ?" and then added, "It is of little importance what the world thinks of anyone else, but every living soul on the face of the earth is concerned with this Man who never varies, who never fails, who never dies."

THE COMING OF JESUS

Our study of the Old Testament introduced us to what is called "The Messianic Hope." Throughout the Old Testament we discovered the fact that the Jewish people were looking forward to the time when the Messiah should come, and the New Testament introduces us to him. He is the Light that shines on every page.

David R. Breed has written a book entitled, "The History of the Preparation of the World for Christ," and that book points out how wonderfully God prepared for the coming of Jesus. The world was at peace under the power of the Roman Empire; great highways had been thrown up (such as the Appian Way), over which the messengers of the gospel could travel, and the tidings could be sent from country to country. The Greek language had become the common tongue of all the civilized world, and was spoken on the streets of Jerusalem, and of Alexandria, as well as in Athens and in Rome. This gave the message of the gospel a hearing which it could not have had if there had been no language which most of the people could understand.

At the same time the religion of the Jews was bankrupt. The Jewish people were divided into parties and sects such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, and their religion had become formal and empty. Indeed, the Sadducees were unbelievers, believing in no spiritual reality. It was into this world that Jesus was born, a world that was waiting for its Lord and which had been made ready for his coming.

To Think About: The American historian Bancroft says that the name of Jesus is written at the top of every page of history. What does he mean by this statement? Would you give your assent?

THE MOTHER OF JESUS

The story of the birth of Jesus is very simply told and is very beautiful. His mother was a Jewish maiden who had her home at Nazareth. Nothing is told us concerning her parents or her own home. We are told, however, that she was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph who was probably much older than she. He was a carpenter and probably died before Jesus reached the time of his public ministry.

The announcement of the birth of Jesus was made to Mary by an angel, and the story of his miraculous birth is told in words of simpleness and beauty in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke and in the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Mary was a woman of simple life, pure in heart, and of deep devotion.

Her character is best revealed in the hymn which is called "The Magnificat," which begins with the words,

> "My soul doth magnify the Lord,
> And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

To Think About: Would you call Mary the ideal woman? How do her life and character compare with the life and character of the best woman you know? Why should religion be the central thing in a woman's life? Why do you react against the thought of an irreligious girl or woman?

BETHLEHEM

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Bethlehem is a little town lying some six miles south of Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem in order to enroll with their tribe. This brings us in touch with history. The statement of Luke 2: 1-4 is very interesting.

You remember that Herod inquired of the chief priests where the Messiah was to be born and the priest replied, "In Bethlehem." "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written through the prophet."

Joseph and Mary found themselves in the midst of a throng of pilgrims, and as they could find no room in the village inn, they took up their abode in a near-by stable, and there the Christ-child was born. It was a lowly beginning for the King of all kings. He was born in poverty and cradled in a manger.

The world went on with its business. Taxes were paid, and hundreds came and went without knowing that the greatest event in human history had taken place in that Judean village.

To Think About: When God works he begins small. When he grows a tree he begins with seed. When he brought in the redemption of the world he sent a little child, born in a manger in an obscure village in Palestine.

THE SHEPHERDS

There are two stories about the birth of Jesus in the Gospels. One is in Matthew and the other is in our lesson. The one is the story of how the Wise Men came from the East, following the star, and were led on by the Spirit of God to Bethlehem, where they presented their gifts to the child King, and bowed before him in worship. These were great men of the East, men of wisdom and learning who came with their learning to bow in the presence of their Lord.

The story of our lesson is in compelling contrast to this story. The angels came not to the wise of the land and the great, but to humble, obscure shepherds who kept watch over their flocks by night. Waiting under the starlit sky they were startled to find suddenly an angel standing by them and the place lighted with glory as of the glory of the Lord. They were startled and afraid, and perhaps ready to flee, but the angel said unto them:

"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

To Think About: The revelation of God came to the shepherds when they were at their tasks. God comes to men who are busy

with the business of life. He came to David as he kept his sheep, to Elisha at his plow, and he will come to us when we, too, are busy at our work.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

The angels give forth a twofold message, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." The angels' message is a promise, and the promise is conditional. Peace does not drop into men's hearts as rain drops from the sky. Peace does not come as a Christmas present. Peace is the fruit which grows upon the tree of effort. Peace comes to men in whom God is well pleased. Peace is given to those who are fit to receive it, and this fitness is the fitness of a humble faith. First righteousness, then peace.

The solo is sung by heaven's leading chorister, as in Handel's oratorio, and then suddenly the heavenly host breaks into the song, "Glory to God." It is interesting, too, to remember that the angel did not hover over the heads of the shepherds, but stood upon the ground in their midst, and the herald whispered into their hearts, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."

To Think About: The New Testament contains four great Christmas hymns: the "Magnificat," the "Benedictus," the "Nunc Dimittis," and the "Gloria in Excelsis." Memorize the words of each.

THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

If you turn to John's Gospel you will get the interpretation and meaning of the birth of Jesus. He tells us that the "Word was made flesh," and the Apostle Paul tells us that "God was in Christ." This is what we mean by the incarnation.

To Think About: Dr. Francis L. Patton said, "It is far more important to know who Jesus was than to know what Jesus said. When you leave out the divinity of Christ the authority for his teachings goes also."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Sit down and read the Gospel of Mark through from beginning to end without stopping.
2. You have read the life of Lincoln, of Washington. Have you also read the life of Jesus?
3. Why do we date our letters "A.D. 1924"?
4. What interests you most about the birth of Jesus?
5. Why do Protestants refuse to worship the Virgin Mary?
6. In what way did God prepare the world for the coming of Christ?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."—Luke 2: 52.

TEXT OF LESSON, Luke 2: 40-52.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'sa-lem at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast;

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'sa-lem; and his parents knew it not;

44 But supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance:

45 And when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'sa-lem, seeking for him.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions:

47 And all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'sus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Je-ru'sa-lem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Je-ru'sa-lem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'sa-lem; and Jo'seph and his mother knew not *of it*.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Je-ru'sa-lem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'sus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Time—April A.D. 8 Place—Jerusalem

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. July 7. Luke 2: 40-52. The Boyhood of Jesus.
T. July 8. II Tim. 3: 14-17. The Boy and His Bible.
W. July 9. I Sam. 1: 21-28. The Boy and His Church.
T. July 10. Matt. 18: 1-6. The Child and the Kingdom.
F. July 11. John 6: 5-14. The Boy Who Helped.
S. July 12. Matt. 21: 12-17. Children Worshiping.
S. July 13. Ps. 119: 9-16. Guided in the Way.

THE LESSON STORY

Jesus was born in December, 5 B.C. It is difficult to follow exactly the order of events, but we have a general idea of what took place in these early months of the life of our Lord.

After forty days, which would bring us to February, 4 B.C., Jesus was taken to the Temple, and there, according to the custom, he was presented before the Lord. The aged priest, Simeon, taking the Child in his arms, blessed him, and pronounced the words of the "Nunc Dimittis."

About this time took place the slaughter of the Innocents and the flight into Egypt. One of the marks of time occurs in the lesson with the mention of Herod, for secular history tells us that Herod died the next year, at the age of seventy.

Jesus returned with his parents to Nazareth, and there he remained in the Nazareth home for a period of almost thirty years. Only once during those thirty years is the silence broken, when the events recorded in this lesson took place. He was then twelve years of age, and was attending the passover feast in Jerusalem.

To Think About: Dr. Farrar, in his "Life of Christ," in speaking of the home at Nazareth, says:

"The traveler who has followed any of those children, as I have done, to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, happy, patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those houses. The mats or carpets are laid loose along the walls; shoes and sandals are taken off at the threshold; from the center hangs a lamp, which forms the only ornament of the room; in some recess in the wall is placed the wooden chest, painted with bright colors, which contains the books or other possessions of the family; on a ledge that runs around the wall, within easy reach, are neatly rolled up the gay-colored quilts which serve as beds, and on the same ledge are ranged the earthen vessels for daily use; near the door stand the large, common water jars of red clay, with a few twigs and green leaves, often of aromatic shrubs, thrust into their orifices to keep the water cool. At mealtime a painted wooden stool is placed in the center of the apartment, a large tray is put upon it, and in the middle of the tray stands the dish of rice and meat, or stewed fruits, from which all help them-

selves in common. Both before and after the meal the servant or the youngest member of the family pours water over the hands from a brazen ewer into a brazen bowl. So quiet, so simple, so humble, so uneventful was the outward life of the family of Nazareth."

JESUS IN THE HOME

The lesson gives us a very beautiful and natural picture. It is good for us to discover that the record concerning Jesus' early life presents Jesus to us as a normal, natural child. He grew up in the home at Nazareth under normal and natural conditions. It would appear that shortly after the visit to the Temple when Jesus was twelve years of age, Joseph died, for he does not again appear in the story of the life of Christ. That there were other children in the home we know from the Bible record.

The people knew all about Jesus' home. They said: "Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" The students of the New Testament have been divided in their views about this family relationship. It was an old view that these brothers and sisters, so-called, were really cousins of our Lord, but this view is now abandoned. It has also been held that they were the children of Joseph before his marriage to the Virgin Mary. The view usually held, however, is that they were the children of Joseph and Mary, born after the birth of Jesus, and were in deed and in truth his brothers and sisters.

To Think About: True religion is not to be found in doing extraordinary things, but in performing ordinary things in an extraordinary way. Jesus was busy with the ordinary things of life, but manifested the Spirit of God in all his works and ways.

JESUS IN THE SCHOOL

It would be interesting to know more about the way in which Jesus came into the possession of his wisdom. That he was wise beyond his years is evident from the story of the lesson.

The school which was connected with the synagogue was of more importance than the synagogue itself, and nothing was allowed to interfere with the training of youth. Of course, the Bible was the main textbook, and it would be studied in the presence of the rabbi.

In the home, Jesus not only learned obedience, but he learned reverence, and came in touch with God. We should not forget, too, in thinking of the education of Jesus, the world which was at his own door. In those days, northern Galilee had a great, surging population from all over the Greek and Roman world. Travelers from all parts of the world passed through Galilee on their way to Egypt, and Jesus received in this cosmopolitan community impressions from the outside world.

To Think About: It is interesting to remember that Jesus was thirty years in preparing for his life work. When we remember that his public ministry covered only three years we recognize how important the element of preparation is. Jesus took thirty years in preparation for three years' service. Sometimes young people feel that three years' preparation is sufficient for thirty years' service.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Three times a year the Jewish people went up to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover, at Pentecost, and at the feast of the tabernacles. When Jesus was twelve years of age he became what is known as a "son of the law," that is to say, he became of age, and at that time was confirmed, or became a member of the Church, as we would say.

The passover lasted for seven days, and during these days in the busy city with its throngs of pilgrims, Jesus, as a lad, would be interested and instructed. The people traveled in companies, and when the Nazareth caravan left Jerusalem Jesus was not missed. It was not until the caravan had traveled perhaps eight or nine miles, a day's journey, that it was discovered that Jesus was not in the company.

Joseph and Mary immediately returned to the city, and after a thorough search found him in the Temple among the rabbis, hearing them and asking them questions. His amazing insight into the Scriptures astonished his elders, and filled the mind of his mother with amazement. When she saw him she said, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing." His reply was full of mystery. "How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

The story tells us that they did not know what Jesus meant. Mary had spoken about "thy father and I"; Jesus in return spoke of "my Father's house."

To Think About: If you were lost in a great city where would your parents think of looking for you? Jesus told Mary and Joseph that they might have known where to find him. He was always about his Father's business, and in his Father's house.

JESUS AND HIS FATHER

The words of Mary suggest that she had authority over Jesus. It was she and not Joseph who spoke. It was she who took the initiative and her words are winged not only with concern, but with the suggestion of rebuke. His reply suggests that Jesus, even at the early age of twelve, had come into a strange and mysterious consciousness of his mission and his personality.

We are not told in the New Testament when Jesus came to know his mission in life definitely, and to know his unique relationship

to God, but this experience in the Temple would lead us to believe that something stirred within his own consciousness that made him know that he was different from others, and that he had a distinct mission to perform and was related to God, his heavenly Father, in a way that separated him even from his own home. His words perplexed his mother, and they continue to perplex us.

To Think About: One of the most interesting studies in the life of Christ is to gather together the passages which speak of Jesus' knowledge of himself. He said, "I am the light of the world"; "I am the bread of life." Jesus knew who he was and what he came into the world to do.

JESUS IN THE WORKSHOP

Notwithstanding the revelation which came to Mary concerning Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem, Jesus was still her child, a lad of twelve, and the story tells us that he returned with Joseph and Mary to Nazareth, and grew up in the home. Joseph was a carpenter, and according to the custom of the Jews, which made it necessary for every child to learn a trade, Jesus, too, became a carpenter.

So he learned to labor and to know the joy of work that was well done. When he said, "Take my yoke upon you," he was using an illustration from his own trade. He had often made yokes, and knew the difference between a yoke which was easy and a yoke which was hard. We see Jesus growing up in his home, increasing day by day in wisdom and in stature and in every quality of a man.

To Think About: Dr. Alexander Whyte, in speaking of Jesus growing in favor with God and men says, "No child, no boy, no lad, no young man in all Galilee was in such universal favor, was so popular and so beloved for thirty years, as was Jesus of Nazareth."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Boys and girls can be interested in the Church at an early age.
2. Young people are known by the company they keep as well as by the places to which they go.
3. Obedience is the first test of life.
4. How can we discover what is our Father's business?
5. Preparation is necessary for life. Jesus was thirty years getting ready for his life work. Opportunities are worthless if we are not prepared for them when they come.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."—Mark 1: 11.

TEXT OF LESSON, Mark 1: 1-11.

American Standard Version

1 The beginning of the gospel of Je'sus Christ, the Son of God.

2 Even as it is written in I-sa'i-ah the prophet,
Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way;
3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight;

4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the country of Ju-dæ'a, and all they of Je-ru'sa-lem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jor'dan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and *had* a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey.

7 And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Je'sus came from Naz'a-reth of Gal'i-lee, and was baptized of John in the Jor'dan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him:

11 And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

Authorized Version

1 The beginning of the gospel of Je'sus Christ, the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Ju-dæ'a, and they of Je-ru'sa-lem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jor'dan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Je'sus came from Naz'a-reth of Gal'i-lee, and was baptized of John in Jor'dan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Time—January, A.D. 27 **Place**—The Jordan

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. July 14. Mark 1: 1-11. The Baptism of Jesus.
T. July 15. Matt. 3: 13-17. Fulfilling All Righteousness.
W. July 16. Phil. 2: 5-11. Confessing Christ.
T. July 17. I John 5: 18-21. Being in Christ.
F. July 18. Acts 9: 10-18. The Baptism of Saul.
S. July 19. Matt. 28: 16-20. Baptism to Be Observed.
S. July 20. Isa. 42: 1-4. Jehovah's Chosen Servant.

THE LESSON STORY

The best way to begin the study of this lesson is to take your Bible and read the story of the baptism of Jesus.

Each of the four Gospels gives us a slightly different account of John the Baptist, and of the baptism of Jesus, and in order to understand the complete story it is necessary to read all these four accounts. Each of the Evangelists gives us the account from a little different point of view and we need all four accounts to give us a complete picture. After reading the verses of the lesson turn to Matt. 3: 1-17; Luke 3: 21, 22; John 1: 19-28.

The Gospel According to Mark, from which our lesson is taken, begins the story of Jesus' life very abruptly. It tells us nothing about his birth or his home at Nazareth. The writer does not refer to any of the Christmas stories. He passes over the boyhood of Jesus and the thirty years of his preparation and begins the story of his life with his baptism and the beginning of his public ministry.

Mark is the shortest of all the four Gospels and scholars tell us that it is the earliest of the four. You can read the Gospel According to Mark through in about two hours, and some evening or some Sunday afternoon it would be worth while to read Mark's Gospel through without stopping. A picture of Jesus will be obtained which will permanently possess the mind and memory of the reader.

To Think About: Notice how each of the Gospels begins the story of the life of Christ. Matthew begins with the family history of Jesus. Mark begins with his public ministry. Luke begins with the birth of Christ. John begins with his preëxistence, "In the beginning was the Word." Why does Mark leave out the stories of Jesus' early life?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

John was the son of Elisabeth and Zacharias. The story of his birth is told in the first chapter of the Gospel According to Luke.

His parents were old, his mother was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus. John was about six months older than Jesus, and he lived in a strange manner. He was a Nazirite; that is, he drank no wine and he kept his hair uncut; he lived his life in what is called "the wilderness." Perhaps he had fellowship with the Jewish party known as the Essenes, who were a sort of hermits and who had sepa-

rated themselves from the world in order to devote their thought to heavenly things.

He is known in the New Testament as John the Baptist and his ministry was identified with the rite of baptism. He received his call to the prophetic office in the wilderness where the word of the Lord came to him as it had come to many of the Old Testament prophets, bidding him go forth and proclaim the reality of God and the fact of judgment.

He began his public ministry about A.D. 26, when Jesus was about thirty years of age. The Old Testament speaks very definitely of the coming of one who would be a forerunner of the Messiah. John was the herald of the New Testament gospel.

To Think About: John and Jesus must have known each other in their boyhood, but they drifted apart. John lived a strange life. Jesus lived a normal, natural life. John soon recognized the superiority of Jesus. He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Early in his life when Gounod was asked who the greatest musicians were, he used to say, "I and Mozart." Later in life he said, "Mozart and I." At the end of his life he said, "Mozart." John from the beginning put Jesus first.

THE MESSAGE OF JOHN

John quickly got the ear and reached the conscience of the people. His strange dress arrested their attention. He was a prophet, and no prophet had appeared in Palestine for four hundred years. Then, too, the people were ready for his message.

He preached a gospel of repentance. The word "repentance" means a "change of mind in regard to one's conduct." He demanded that the people should change their minds about God, about sin, about life, and the people were prepared to hear this message. The Jewish people knew what repentance meant. One of the rabbis said, "If Israel would repent but a single day the Messiah will come."

To Think About: The preaching of repentance has always preceded a revival of true religion. George Whitefield preached repentance, and twenty thousand coal miners gathered to hear his message and thousands of them were led into the Kingdom. Jonathan Edwards preached repentance, and revival after revival swept through New England.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

John used baptism as a symbol. It was an outward sign of inward grace. John's baptism symbolized two things. In the first place it symbolized the inward cleansing which followed repentance. Just as water cleansed and purified the body so repentance cleansed and purified the spirit. In the second place it prefigured the baptism of

the Holy Spirit. John said very clearly that his baptism was inadequate and preparatory.

He not only preached repentance in general but set forth the righteous demands which different classes should meet. The publican should refrain from extortion; the soldier should have done with mutiny and cruelty. In consequence of John's preaching, a mighty revival swept across the country, for the Spirit of God comes upon people who are willing to repent and to turn to God.

To Think About: John demanded not only repentance but confession. A change of mind is not enough. Public confession of allegiance to God should be made. It is possible, perhaps, for a man to be a Christian privately, but the New Testament demands public confession. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

THE COMING OF JESUS

John had been preaching for six months when Jesus came to be baptized. During all this period John had been proclaiming that he was not the Messiah but that One would come who, instead of baptizing with water, would baptize with fire. He had Old Testament authority for proclaiming the coming of the Christ. See Isa. 40: 3-5.

To Think About: John described himself as a "voice of one crying in the wilderness." He would not call attention to himself or to his own personality. He would call attention to Jesus. The true purpose of preaching is to present Jesus Christ. Both the teacher and the preacher are voices, the voices of heralds proclaiming the presence of the King.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

When Jesus appeared before John for baptism John was reluctant to baptize him. There was something about Jesus which separated him from other men. We are not told how intimately John knew Jesus. Doubtless John subjected his candidates for baptism to some examination and he quickly found the true character of Jesus. "I have need to be baptized of thee." Jesus had no sins to confess, no repentance to make, but, nevertheless, he insisted upon being baptized. In answer to John's words, Jesus said, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

To Think About: Jesus took his place among those who took their places with God. He made a public profession of his faith before all the people. Although he was superior to John's ministry, nevertheless, he identified himself with the movement which was on

the side of righteousness. If any man desires the coming of the Kingdom of God let him take his place with God's people.

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

After the baptism by water came the baptism by the Spirit. "Straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him." It would seem that the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove was seen and the voice from heaven acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah was heard by John and by Jesus only. It was not a revelation for the people. It was a revelation to Jesus himself, an acknowledgment of him and an acceptance of his offered life, the symbol and assurance to John that his mission had been fulfilled and that the Messiah had come.

To Think About: Acknowledgment follows obedience. Three times the voice from heaven spoke an acknowledgment to Jesus: (1) at his baptism; (2) at the transfiguration, Mark 9:7; and during the passion week, John 12: 28b. Obedience is the path not only to power but to understanding.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Compare the early life and training of John and Jesus.
2. Did John originate the practice of baptism? Look up "baptism" in a good encyclopædia.
3. Make a study of the word "repentance." Use your Bible concordance and discover what a large place it has in the teaching of the New Testament.
4. What effect had the baptism of Jesus upon Jesus himself, upon John, and upon John's disciples?
5. What is Christian baptism? Give the answer from the "Shorter Catechism."
6. What incidents are omitted by Mark that are given in the other Gospels concerning the baptism of Jesus?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."—Heb. 2: 18.

TEXT OF LESSON, Matt. 4: 1-11.

American Standard Version

1 Then was Je'sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.

3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Je'sus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Je'sus unto him, Get thee hence, Sa'tan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Authorized Version

1 Then was Je'sus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Je'sus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Je'sus unto him, Get thee hence, Sa'tan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Time—January, February, A.D. 27 Place—Desert of Judea

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. July 21. Matt. 4: 1-11. The Temptation of Jesus.
T. July 22. Heb. 4: 12-16. Christ Sympathizes with the Tempted.
W. July 23. Luke 22: 31-38. Christ Intercedes for the Tempted.
T. July 24. Heb. 2: 10-18. Christ Helps the Tempted.
F. July 25. I Thess. 3: 1-10. Satan, the Tempter.
S. July 26. James 1: 1-12. The Meaning of Temptation.
S. July 27. Psalm 124. The Divine Helper Acknowledged.

THE LESSON BACKGROUND

The temptation of Jesus followed immediately after his baptism. There seems to have been in the mind of the Evangelists some direct connection between the baptism and the temptation. Matthew states that the temptation followed because of the revelation that came to Jesus in his baptism. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted." Mark uses the word "straightway," and Luke uses the simple connecting word "and." "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness."

We know the significance of the baptism of Jesus. It was his call to service. It was his consecration to his life work. For thirty years he had been dreaming of it, praying over it, planning for it. At twelve years of age he had been about his Father's business, and at the baptism the great hour of his destiny came.

Down at the Jordan, Christ was acknowledged by his heavenly Father, and was dedicated to his life's task. What it all meant we are not able to understand, but it meant at least that God had put his seal upon Jesus and disclosed to John the Baptist the fact of his Messiahship.

To Think About: Notice the order of the three temptations in Matthew, Matt. 4: 1-11, and in Luke, Luke 4: 1-13; and decide in your own mind which you prefer. Notice the graphic and picturesque description of the temptation which is given in Mark, Mark 1: 12, 13.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

It is difficult to understand how Jesus could be tempted. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that he "hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The meaning doubtless is that being perfectly human, all the trials which come to men came to Jesus. It does not follow, however, that there is complete resemblance between the temptations to which we are prone and those which made their appeal to Jesus. The element of sin, of desire in us, gives temptation its subtle opportunity. There was no sin, no evil desire, no hypocrisy in Jesus. Evil found no response in him, no slumbering principle of evil to which temptation could relate itself.

The temptation, however, may come in the realm of the good. There is a choice between the better and the best. There are decisions

in judgment which must be reached which depend upon conclusions of character. Whatever may be the secret of the mystery, the fact remains that the temptation of Jesus was real, as real as the temptation of Adam, and Milton interpreted the temptation by suggesting that Paradise was regained when Jesus gained the victory.

To Think About: The temptation came to Jesus after he had fasted for forty days. The Devil always chooses his opportunity. He attacks us when we are off guard, when we are weak or weary and lacking in faith.

THE MEANING OF THE TEMPTATION

Temptation is not without its use. It has a meaning. It does not originate without a cause. It is not necessarily temptation to evil, but the testing of life which prepares for future service. The athlete is tested, and when he endures the test his opportunity opens before him.

It is said of Jesus that he learned obedience through the things that he suffered. The Epistle to the Hebrews says: "Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

To Think About: James M. Barrie wrote a beautiful book about his mother. One of the chapters is entitled, "How My Mother Got Her Sweet Face." Of course, you know the answer. She got her sweet face through sorrow. The sweetness came because of suffering. The smile broke through her tears. Peace was born out of days of pain, joy sprang from inner happiness of heart, and her fineness of feature came because of the triumph of faith.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION

Jesus was hungry. The long vigil of his spirit had been broken and he felt the call of physical necessity. For forty days he had been as it were in heaven, in fellowship with God, concerning the work which lay before him. Now he was on earth and in the wilderness.

The great stones lay about his feet. He was conscious of a new and divine power, and the Tempter said: "Use the power you have. Change these stones into bread." This was what Jesus could have done, and in a few weeks or months he changed water into wine, and later fed the hungry thousands with a little lad's lunch. This is what he could do, but what he refused to do.

God does not always do what he can do. Power is always a temptation, for it may be used wrongly. Jesus had identified himself with

humanity, and his answer is that of a man among men, "Man shall not live by bread alone." The Devil had said, "If thou art the Son of God." The temptation was in the "if." He would tempt Jesus to use his power for himself, a power which would have lifted him out of sympathy with man, but he refused. "Bread," Jesus said in effect, "is not the only thing in life. Man cannot live by bread alone. He lives by faith and prayer and obedience to the will of God."

To Think About: George Macdonald, in one of his stories, outlines what he calls the practical creed of a Christian man: (1) A man's business is to know the will of God. (2) God takes upon himself the care of that man. (3) Therefore, a man ought never to be afraid of anything.

THE SECOND TEMPTATION

Jesus had successfully opposed the Devil's theory of life that a man should sacrifice all for a living. He would not work a miracle for his own comfort. He would trust God for the future as well as for the present. God had brought him into the wilderness and would care for him there.

Immediately the Tempter laid hold upon that very faith. He bade Jesus trust God to the very limit. He would have had him perform a miracle so as to disclose his supernatural power in a spectacular way to the people. "Cast thyself down," said the Tempter, "and the angels of God will bear thee up in their arms." If Jesus trusted God, then let him reveal that trust in a public way. The wondering multitude would be awe-struck, and the Kingdom of God would come like a flash of lightning.

The Devil would have had Jesus become a magician and win the people over because of a mysterious magic. Trust in God does not mean recklessness. We can trust God when we are in the path of duty. We make trial of God when we try to use God for our own purposes. In this way we would substitute wonder and magic for faith. When we neglect our Bible and neglect our prayer life and neglect the seed-sowing of the truth and expect a harvest of righteousness, we are tempting God.

To Think About: God does not do for us what we can do for ourselves. He does not work miracles for our curiosity. The Spirit of God had led Jesus into his perplexity and would gently lead him out.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION

The first temptation was an attempt on the part of the Tempter to have Jesus pursue the path of prosperity and comfort. The second would have gained spiritual ends by spectacular means. The third temptation would have introduced into the Kingdom of God the

policy of the world. If Jesus would bow down to the Tempter all the kingdoms of the world would be his.

The Kaiser bowed down and brought upon himself confusion and overthrow. This was the temptation which Jesus faced. Would he bow down to the Tempter in order to receive as his reward the kingdoms of this world? His answer was, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The Fathers of the Church say that the Tempter saw the vision of the cross and fled. There may be truth in this suggestion. The temptation to misuse his power followed Jesus all his life, and at the end he still faced it when the cry was raised, "Come down from the cross."

Christ's way is the way of sacrifice. The world's way is the way of aggrandizement. The answer of Jesus is final. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

To Think About: The secret of life is not getting but giving, not being served but serving. The supreme symbol of life is the cross. Jesus rules the world not from a throne but from his cross.

JESUS' TEMPTATION AND OURS

The temptation is sure. The secret of victory is in calling to our help the divine strength. Jesus appealed to the Word of God, and in that faith he conquered.

Call to mind the old story of Ulysses who passed the sirens with their fascinating music because he was tied to the mast. That is one way of overcoming temptation. You may sign your declaration of independence in your own blood, but your resolve and your endurance will depend upon your own weak will. Do not forget the sequel of that classic story, how the Argonauts passed the rocks and the sirens with all their allurements, because they had on board some one who could sing a sweeter song than the sirens ever knew. Because they were charmed by the music of Orpheus, the bewitching music of the sirens lost its charm. We, too, may call to our side One who sings the song of victory, who fought the fight and overcame, and who stands in the center of life victorious. Temptations lose their power when he is nigh.

To Think About: We cannot avoid temptation, but in God's strength we can master it. Let us, however, be sure that we do not fight alone. Let us call our divine Ally to our side, even as France called America. Let us not fight alone. "The eternal God is thy dwelling-place."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Notice the different order of the three temptations in Matthew and Luke. Which order seems better?

2. What is the relation between the baptism and the temptation?
3. Where did the Evangelist obtain the story of the temptation?
4. Interpret Heb. 4:15.
5. What was the point of attack in the first, second, and third temptations?
6. What bearing has the temptation of Jesus upon the spiritual life of Christians?

FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION

"No man is matriculated to the art of life until he has been well tempted."—George Eliot.

"Every temptation is an opportunity of our getting nearer to God."—John Quincy Adams.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 31. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Jesus saith unto him, Follow me."—John 1: 43.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 1: 35-46.

For entire lesson, see John 1: 35-51

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples;

36 And he looked upon Je'sus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'sus.

38 And Je'sus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rab'bi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother.

41 He findeth first his own brother Si'mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si'ah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).

42 He brought him unto Je'sus. Je'sus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Si'mon the son of John: thou shalt be called Ce'phas (which is by interpretation, Pe'ter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Gal'i-lee, and he findeth Phil'ip: and Je'sus saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Phil'ip was from Beth-sa'i-da, of the city of An'drew and Pe'ter.

45 Phil'ip findeth Na-than'a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Mo'ses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth, the son of Jo'seph.

46 And Na-than'a-el said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Naz'a-reth? Phil'ip saith unto him, Come and see.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

35 ¶ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Je'sus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'sus.

38 Then Je'sus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rab'bi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Si'mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si-as, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Je'sus. And when Je'sus beheld him, he said, Thou art Si'mon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Ce'phas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

43 ¶ The day following Je'sus would go forth into Gal'i-lee, and findeth Phil'ip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Phil'ip was of Beth-sa'i-da, the city of An'drew and Pe'ter.

45 Phil'ip findeth Na-than'a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Mo'ses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth, the son of Jo'seph.

46 And Na-than'a-el said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Naz'a-reth? Phil'ip saith unto him, Come and see.

Time—February, A.D. 27

Place—Bethany

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. July 28. John 1: 35-42. Pointing Men to Jesus.
T. July 29. John 1: 43-51. Jesus Finding Men.
W. July 30. Mark 8: 34-38. Requirements for Discipleship.
T. July 31. John 10: 11-18. Following the Good Shepherd.
F. August 1. Heb. 13: 16-21. Following the Great Shepherd.
S. August 2. I Peter 5: 1-11. Following the Chief Shepherd.
S. August 3. Prov. 3: 13-18. Wisdom's Happy Ways.

THE LESSON BACKGROUND

During Jesus' forty days in the wilderness the Baptist continued his ministry, gradually moving northward up the Jordan on the east side of the river, until he came to one of the fords near the Sea of Galilee. John's work took on the form of permanency and a group of devoted disciples gathered around him. They came from Bethsaida and evidently attended upon his ministry with zeal and devotion.

The first disciples of Jesus were first the disciples of John: Andrew and John. The permanency of the work of John the Baptist at last alarmed the leaders at Jerusalem and a commission was appointed to wait upon him. To him they put the blunt question, "Who art thou?" John refused to be identified with any of the prophets of the past and said distinctly that he was not the Christ.

His statement was very clear. He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet."

To Think About: When John began his ministry he said that One mightier than he would come after him. After the baptism he proclaimed that the Messiah had come. "I baptize in water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."

POINTING TO JESUS

When Jesus returned from the temptation, John the Baptist immediately pointed Jesus out to Andrew and John. There was something about Jesus which impressed John and identified Jesus in his thought with the words of Isaiah, "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter."

The words of the first chapter of John are very graphic. Looking upon Jesus as he walked, John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" His words were definite, and determined the conduct of his own disciples. "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me." John's witness was positive and convincing, and on his testimony the disciples who had gathered around John drew off and followed Jesus.

Two of them, Andrew and John, immediately attached themselves to Jesus. They spent the afternoon with him, and became convinced

that John's testimony was true. They left John and permanently attached themselves to Jesus, the long-looked-for Messiah.

To Think About: Maltbie D. Babcock has a little poem which suggests that life is a school, and so it is. The early disciples first went to school to John, and then were graduated into the school of Jesus. We are never truly trained or educated until we sit at the feet of Christ, the great Teacher.

ANDREW AND JOHN

Andrew and John, for we surmise that John is the unnamed disciple who accompanied Andrew, had the honor of being the first disciples of Jesus. They were interested in John's teachings, and John had definitely said that he was not the Christ. John was the prophet pointing to Jesus, and Andrew, and John the Evangelist, were the first to take the Baptist at his word and follow Jesus.

Preaching is one of the ways which God has used to lead men into Christian discipleship. Spurgeon, the great preacher, was led to Christ by a sermon he heard preached by an obscure preacher who was preaching from the text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Wilfred Grenfell was led to Christ and to his great missionary service by the preaching of Moody. The business of teachers and preachers is to proclaim Christ in such a way that those who hear them will become personal followers and disciples of Christ, our Lord.

To Think About:

"Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea,
Day by day his sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

"As, of old, apostles heard it
By the Galilean lake,
Turned from home and toil and kindred,
Leaving all for his dear sake."

PETER AND JAMES

Andrew and John went with Jesus to his home about the tenth hour, probably four o'clock in the afternoon. Nothing is told us concerning the conversation but they were convinced in their own minds that they had found the Christ. It must have been a wonderful visit, and it would be easy for us to imagine what Jesus talked about and how their hearts burned within them as he talked to them concerning the revelations contained in the Scriptures. So convinced were they in their minds, that each of them went forth from Christ's presence to follow him to the end and to bring others into the same discipleship.

The story is very simple. Andrew first found his own brother Simon. He came to Simon with the convincing conclusion, "We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ)," and led him into the presence of Jesus. It was a great piece of work, for Peter's influence upon the Christian Church is now a matter of history. Jesus looked upon Peter and said, "Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)."

It is believed that John also brought his brother James. However, Andrew was the first to bring his brother. This is a good way of doing the Christian work. While many are led unto God by preaching, more are led by personal work, and to begin at home is a good way to begin personal work. Andrew and John began with their own relations.

To Think About: Have you ever led any one person to Christ? If not, why not? Have you ever spoken to anyone else about becoming a disciple of Christ? Why not?

THE FINDING OF PHILIP

Jesus was on his way into Galilee and came upon Philip and immediately said to him, "Follow me." Philip was a friend of Andrew and Peter, of James and John, and belonged to their city of Bethsaida. Perhaps Jesus had known Philip, or the other disciples had told him about him.

Philip was perhaps a Greek, as his name would signify. His "finding" by Jesus is an example of the third way in which men are led unto God. The first way is by preaching; the second is by personal work; but Philip was led into the Kingdom by Jesus himself.

Very often we are unable to tell how disciples are won for Christ. The influence of the Spirit of God upon men's hearts belongs to the realm of the mysterious, but it is no less real and effective. "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

To Think About: Jesus' words to Philip were, "Follow me." One of our American poets has said:

"If Jesus Christ is a man—
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is a God—
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air!"

"COME AND SEE"

Jesus gave Philip something to do. He bade him follow him, and to follow Jesus is to obey him. The first thing that Philip did for Jesus was to win another disciple. Before receiving converts into the church of Korea each convert must first win some one else to Christ. This is the way that sincerity is tested. Philip found Nathanael and found that Nathanael was full of objections.

When Nathanael heard from where Jesus came and who he was his reply was, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip did not argue the question with him but replied, "Come and see." Philip wished to bring Nathanael into the presence of Jesus himself; then he knew that Jesus would bring his own conviction.

"Observe Philip's way of dealing with Nathanael. Philip might have argued, either that the popular prejudice against Nazareth, which Nathanael quoted, rested on no sure foundation, or that, whatever its truth, Jesus belonged to Nazareth in so limited and temporary a sense that the reputation of the place did not touch him or his claim to fulfill the Messianic prophecies. This, perhaps, would have been our modern plan of meeting the objection. Philip takes a shorter course. His object is not to put himself argumentatively in the right by vindicating Nazareth, or by showing that it does not stand in his way; he only wants to bring Nathanael into the presence, aye, close to the person of the Son of God. He is convinced that if Nathanael can only see him, speak with him, breathe the atmosphere that surrounds him, feel the divine majesty and tenderness which had already won himself, the prejudice against Nazareth will be forgotten. 'Philip saith unto him, Come and see.'"

To Think About: The only way to test a religion is to try it. Religion, like chemistry, is proved by experimentation. "Come and see" is the best argument.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Bruce's life of Christ is called "The Training of the Twelve." Is this a good title for a life of Christ? If so, why?

2. When Sir Humphrey Davy was asked what was his greatest discovery he said, "Michael Faraday." What did he mean and what application of this incident can you make to this lesson?

3. Personal work is the best kind of preaching. Hand-picked fruit is best. People who are won to Christ by their friends are well won.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."—John 2: 5.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 2: 1-11.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee; and the mother of Je'sus was there:

2 And Je'sus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when the wine failed, the mother of Je'sus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 And Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Je'sus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it.

9 And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of his signs did Je'sus in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee; and the mother of Je'sus was there:

2 And both Je'sus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Je'sus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Je'sus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Je'sus in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Time—February, A.D. 27 **Place—Cana in Galilee**

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. August 4. John 2: 1-11. The First Miracle of Jesus.
T. August 5. Matt. 8: 18-27. Christ's Power Over Nature.
W. August 6. Matt. 15: 21-28. Christ's Power Over Evil Spirits.
T. August 7. Luke 6: 12-19. Christ's Power Over Disease.
F. August 8. Luke 7: 11-17. Christ's Power Over Death.
S. August 9. John 20: 24-31. Miracles Strengthen Faith.
S. August 10. Ps. 108: 1-6. The Testimony of Trust.

FROM THE JORDAN TO CANA

Jesus had gathered about him a group of five or perhaps six men who had been formerly John's disciples. With this beginning he set out on his public ministry. Later the six were increased to twelve. Jesus with Peter and John, Andrew and James, Philip and Nathanael, left the Jordan and traveled to Cana in Galilee.

Counting the day on which they left a full day spent in travel, they came on the third day to Cana, which was the home of Nathanael. It was a village not far removed from Jesus' own home at Nazareth, and doubtless he was well known there, and had both friends and relatives in the village.

We are not told why he went to Cana and are not informed whether he knew of the wedding that was to take place there. In any event, Jesus' mother was present, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited. We are not told whether they were invited before they arrived in Cana or whether the invitation came after it was known that he and his disciples had arrived in the town. Perhaps the best way to interpret the situation is that either the bride or the bridegroom was an intimate friend or perhaps a relative of Jesus and his mother, and that the date had been set and all arrangements made.

To Think About: The Gospels always present Jesus to us as a man who enjoyed friendship and society. John was austere and ascetic. Jesus was social-minded. Later in his ministry, the Pharisees brought this as a charge against him. They said, "Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

JESUS AT THE WEDDING

A Jewish wedding, like weddings in all countries, was a very joyous affair. The engagement of these young people had taken place perhaps six months or a year in advance of the wedding, and on the evening of the wedding the bride was led to the home of her husband amid scenes of festivity and rejoicing. In "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Edersheim, who knew Jewish customs thoroughly, says:

"First came the merry sounds of music; then they who distributed among the people wine and oil, and nuts among the children; next the bride, covered with the bridal veil, her long hair flowing, surrounded by her companions, and led by 'the friends of the bridegroom,' and 'the children of the bride-chamber.' All around were in festive array; some carried torches, or lamps on poles; those nearest had myrtle branches and chaplets of flowers. Everyone rose to salute the procession, or join it; and it was deemed almost a religious duty to break into praise of the beauty, the modesty, or the virtues of the bride. Arrived at her new home, she was led to her husband. Some such formula as 'Take her according to the Law of Moses and of Israel,' would be spoken, and the bride and bride-

groom crowned with garlands. Then a formal legal instrument, . . . was signed, . . . Then, after the prescribed washing of hands and benediction, the marriage supper began—the cup being filled, and the solemn prayer of bridal benediction spoken over it."

Jesus was glad to have a part in these festivities because marriage is sacred and every home is a consecrated place. Christianity has always given the home and family life the first place in the social order.

To Think About: The consecration of marriage by Jesus makes it more than a civil contract. It is a religious service, and, as the marriage service reads, it should be entered into not "unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God."

JESUS AND HIS MOTHER

As the wedding feast proceeded it was discovered that the supply of wine provided by the host had been exhausted. It is not necessary for us here to enter into a discussion of the use of wine. There is a great deal of difference between the customs that prevailed in Palestine and the traffic in strong drink as our modern world knows it.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, seems to have had some place of authority or position in the home, for when the knowledge of the shortage became known she merely approached Jesus and announced to him the fact that there was no more wine. Jesus' words to his mother seem abrupt. He said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." While the word "woman" has no suggestion of disrespect, yet the words of Jesus show us that he was starting out on a new mission which his mother could not fully understand.

It is difficult for us to know why she came to Jesus with her statement which had the form of an appeal. Bengel, one of the finest of New Testament scholars, intimates that Mary was suggesting to Jesus that he and his disciples should take their leave, and so set an example to the rest of the guests. Even Calvin goes so far as to say that Mary was suggesting to Jesus that he fill up the time by some interesting table talk so that the attention would be diverted from what was sure to be an embarrassing situation.

Probably the statement which Mary made to Jesus was a perfectly natural and normal statement. She had known Jesus for thirty years, and had known that he was capable and wise and that in some way he would contrive to help in such a difficult situation. She could scarcely have understood that he would perform a miracle to supply the deficiency.

She had been with him in strange and difficult situations and had reason to believe in him and to trust his judgment. At the same time a growing mystery concerning Jesus had obtained a large place in her thinking and her words lead us to believe that even in an

emergency she could trust him. Her final judgment was conclusive. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

To Think About: Mary's words, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," would be a good motto for us to use as a challenge and as a comfort. The things that Jesus tells us to do are safe things, wise things, and if at times they seem impossible, nevertheless, obedience is always the path to power as well as to knowledge.

THE MIRACLE

Quietly and without ostentation Jesus ordered the servants to fill with water the six stone water jars, that were standing at the entrance to the house. These were great stone jars, not modeled from clay, but carved out of soft limestone, and were huge vessels, each one holding, according to the story, two or three firkins apiece. A "firkin" is a measure of capacity and equals about eight gallons, three and a half pints. Dr. Moffatt translates the word by the term "twenty gallons." Six stone jars each holding twenty gallons, would make a large quantity of water.

These jars were filled with water up to the brim. No word seems to have been spoken or prayer offered, but the command was given to draw forth from the jars, after the water had been poured into them, and then it was discovered that the water had been changed into the choicest wine. The ruler of the feast, or as we would say, the chairman of the banquet, after he had tasted the new wine, called the bridegroom and said, "Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now."

To Think About: A miracle is not a suspension of, or interference with, the laws of nature, but is something which can be accounted for by the operation of nature. It is not a violation of law but is the working of a higher law. If the mental can supersede the physical so that a child may put to shame the strength of the horse, and if the moral can control the mental, may we not allow the same high distinction to the Almighty? God is not one of the laws of life; he is their Originator. God is not part and parcel of this world, but is over and above all, blessed forever.

THE MEANING OF THE MIRACLE

There are four words for miracle in the New Testament. One is usually translated "mighty works," another "wonders," another "works," and another "signs." John uses the word "signs." The miracles which he records are symbols having spiritual value. In the Gospel According to John are given seven miracles, each one of which is a sign of the divine character and life.

This changing of the water into wine was a sign of the abundant life and satisfaction which come to men through the grace of the gospel.

To Think About: "That which is already valuable in human society is made by the gospel more valuable than ever, and is increased so as to become the possession of multitudes, who but for the influence of Jesus would never have enjoyed it at all. The water of earthly fellowship is transmuted into the wine of spiritual communion, and in this regard the very magnitude of the quantity of wine produced becomes a most interesting and suggestive thing, indicating, as it does, the great capacity of the gospel for ministering to the highest enjoyment of mankind."

THE GLORY OF JESUS

John concludes the story of the first miracle with these very suggestive words, "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him."

What is meant by "manifested his glory"? The word "glory" suggests to us the idea of brilliancy, and we think of the glory of Christ as manifested in his transfiguration, but no such revelation of glory was exhibited in this first miracle. No change was seen in Jesus. His work was performed quietly and without demonstration.

We see him manifesting his power over the works of nature, demonstrating the fact that he is Lord not only of the world of men but of the world of things. It is a revelation, too, of his goodness. He presents himself to us as One who is willing to help to make glad the hearts of men.

To Think About: The ruler of the feast said, "Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now." This is the way with the gospel. Christianity promises that "the best is yet to be." The world gives us the best at the first. Christ is always giving us better things.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. What was Jesus' purpose in going to Cana?
2. Contrast the ministry of Jesus with that of John.
3. What is a miracle? What is the greatest miracle in the New Testament?
4. How do you explain the attitude of Jesus toward his mother?
5. If you were substituting another word for "glory" in v. 11 what word would you use?
6. Make a list of the miracles of Jesus.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 33. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

(May be used with temperance applications)

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." —Matt. 21: 13.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 2: 13-22.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Je'sus went up to Je-ru'sa-lem.

14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables;

16 And to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.

18 The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Je'sus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

13 ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Je'sus went up to Je-ru'sa-lem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Je'sus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Je'sus had said.

Time—April 11-17, A.D. 27 **Place**—Jerusalem

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. August 11. John 2: 13-22. Jesus Cleanses the Temple.
T. August 12. I Tim. 3: 14-16. The Church, God's House.
W. August 13. Eph. 1: 15-23. The Church, Christ's Body.
T. August 14. Eph. 5: 22-30. Christ the Head of the Church.
F. August 15. I Cor. 6: 8-11. A Cleansed People.
S. August 16. I Cor. 3: 16-23. The Temple of God.
S. August 17. Psalm 15. A Clean Life.

THE PASSOVER FEAST

The passover was one of the three greatest Jewish feasts. It held the place in every Jew's mind that Independence Day holds in the minds of Americans. The passover suggested freedom, liberty, patriotism, nationality. It symbolized the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage.

It was to the passover that Jesus went when he was twelve years old. It was during the passover that he was crucified. Jesus was a true Jew and went up to the feast to worship, for he, too, longed for fellowship with God and sought in the Temple a place of prayer.

It was perhaps more of a holiday with many of the people than a holy day, for Josephus tells us that at the time of the passover there were frequently more than two million visitors present in the Holy City. We can scarcely imagine the congested condition of affairs in Jerusalem at this time.

To Think About: Jesus in his youth had formed good habits. One of his habits was Church attendance. Even although the Church was not above criticism Jesus took his place there and did his best to improve conditions and make it a meeting place for his soul with God.

TRADING IN THE TEMPLE

The religion of the Jews had become a very complex affair. In the first place, every Jew once a year was compelled to pay his Temple tax. This tax had to be paid in the half shekel of Jewish money, which amounted to about thirty-three cents. It could not be paid in the coinage of the Roman Empire; consequently the people coming up out of Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria, were compelled to exchange their native money for the Jewish shekel, or half shekel. To make this possible money changers took up their places in the Temple courts for the purpose of supplying Jewish money.

This in itself was wrong. Moreover, fraud attended the business transactions and trading in money was fraught with corruption.

In the second place sacrifice was necessary for all worshipers. According to the social position of the people they offered oxen or sheep or doves. To bring these animals with them from the country was difficult or impossible. Consequently, dealers in these Temple sacrifices became established in the courts of the Temple. It must have been an unattractive spectacle.

The fraud and corruption attendant upon the business transactions aggravated the nuisance and it must have been a distressing sight to those who loved peace and quietness and who thought of the Temple as a place of prayer.

To Think About: Read the chapter called "Vanity Fair" in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Prayer and worship are impossible in a church where the physical surroundings distract the mind and disturb the soul.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

In this lesson we see Jesus in a new light. In our last lesson he was bringing joy and cheer to the hearts of his friends. Here he used a knotted cord, and revealed "indignant scorn." He drove the sheep and oxen, together with their owners, headlong from the Temple courts, overturned the tables of those who were exchanging money, and ordered those who owned the caged doves to remove them from God's house. His words vibrate with passion and indignation. "Take these things hence," he said; "make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

We sometimes speak of John as a "reformer" and of Jesus as a "Redeemer." Here we see Jesus as a reformer. His righteous indignation burned hot against those who have desecrated the holy place of the Most High. Some one has said that there are plenty of people to-day who love God but what the world needs is some one who will hate evil and fight the Devil. We need good haters as well as good lovers. The psalmist puts it in the true light when he says, "Ye that love Jehovah, hate evil."

To Think About: Why was it possible for Jesus single-handed to cleanse the Temple of those who had desecrated it? There may be many answers but one is sufficient. They knew that they were in the wrong. Conscience always makes cowards of us. The man who is in the right is not only forewarned but is forearmed.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

Jesus gives us the proper standard by which to estimate the house of God. He calls it "my Father's house." It is a place of worship, a place of prayer, and a place of silence. His enthusiasm for God's house had stirred his soul, and he was willing to risk his life in order that peace and purity might be restored to the Temple.

Those who saw him remembered the words of the Old Testament which said, "Zeal for thy house shall eat me up."

Can you think of some of the ways in which the Church is desecrated to-day? Do you think that we have improved upon the conditions which have existed in the past? How can we make the house of God a house of prayer rather than a place of business?

To Think About: When is it right to be angry? How do you explain the words, "Stand in awe, and sin not," or, as the footnote says, "Be ye angry, and sin not"?

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

We do not wonder that the people turned to Jesus and asked him on whose authority he was acting. They demanded of him a sign to show them his authority for acting in such a strange way. Jesus replied in words that were then mysterious, and which were afterwards used against him. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The Jews were amazed and said, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?" John gives us the explanation which was hidden from the people to whom Jesus spoke. Jesus was not speaking of the Temple made of stones. He was speaking of his own body. Years afterwards, when Jesus had risen from the dead, the disciples remembered his words and thought back into his life, and there came to them great faith when they were conscious of the fact that from the beginning Jesus knew that he was treading the way to the cross.

To Think About: We must always take into account who he is who is able to do these great things. He is the Lord himself, and his authority is in his own keeping. The greatest sign that can be given to the children of men is the life of our Lord himself.

THE AWAKENING OF FAITH

If you read on to the end of the chapter you will discover that this event created a sort of faith in Jesus on the part of the people. They were allured by the wonder of it. They were caught in the glamor of the wonderful. We read that they believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles which he did, and yet Jesus did not trust them.

He did not believe in them. He knew their innermost motives, and he knew that they were attracted to him by curiosity and not by love. Faith is a mutual thing.

To Think About: "Suppose, then, we turn around the whole inquiry, and instead of saying, 'Do you believe in Jesus?' we should say, 'Does Jesus believe in you—you whited sepulcher?' That would empty the church, and the sooner the better, if there be not the real soul faith in us. Weakness cannot win the battle, insincerity cannot wear, and usefully wear, the armor of God. The man who does not draw the arrow with his soul will never smite the king."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Compare this story of the cleansing of the Temple with the records found in Matt. 21: 12, 13; Mark 11: 15-17; Luke 19: 45, 46.
2. In what way may we to-day make God's house a house of merchandise?
3. How may we help in keeping the church a place of prayer?
4. Sometimes we speak of John as a "reformer" and of Jesus as a "Redeemer." Is this contrast accurate?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

JESUS TALKS WITH NICODEMUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John 3: 16.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 3: 1-3, 8-17

For entire lesson, see John 3: 1-17

American Standard Version

1 Now there was a man of the Phar'i-sees, named Nic-o-de'mus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rab'bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Je'sus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

* * * * *

8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nic-o-de'mus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Is'-ra-el, and understandest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?

13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, who is in heaven.

14 And as Mo'ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Authorized Version

1 There was a man of the Phar'-i-sees, named Nic-o-de'mus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Je'sus by night, and said unto him, Rab'bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

* * * * *

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nic-o-de'mus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Is'ra-el, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of* heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 ¶ And as Mo'ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 ¶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Time—April, A.D. 27. **Place**—Jerusalem

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. August 18. John 3: 1-17. Jesus Talks with Nicodemus.
T. August 19. John 1: 1-13. Born of God.
W. August 20. I John 2: 25-29. Born of Christ.
T. August 21. Titus 3: 1-7. Born of the Holy Spirit.
F. August 22. Ezek. 36: 22-27. A New Heart.
S. August 23. Eph. 4: 17-24. The New Man.
S. August 24. Isa. 11: 1-9. The Branch that Brings Blessings.

NICODEMUS THE PHARISEE

Jesus made a specialty of dealing with individuals. He was more interested in persons than he was in people. He liked to call people by their names. He gathered them out of the multitudes one by one. He began with a few disciples, John and Andrew, James and Peter. After that he found Philip, and Philip found Nathanael.

This lesson introduces us to Jesus alone with Nicodemus, in the midst of the great multitudes of Jerusalem. He had been at work for about two months and had gathered a few disciples, and had performed miracles enough to startle the people, to raise questions, and to awaken wonder. In John 2: 23, 24, we read "many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men."

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, that is, he belonged to the best class, the purest-living and the noblest-thinking class of his nation. He was a ruler, which means that he was a member of the Jewish council, the sanhedrin, and occupied a position of trust and responsibility.

To Think About: Dr. J. D. Jones, in a sermon on Nicodemus, says: "Nicodemus was a scholar. He was a teacher of Israel. And so, when I see him seeking Jesus, I seem to behold scholarship at the feet of Christ. It would be a real difficulty in the way of accepting Christianity, says Dr. Gwatkin, if it did not attract the best men of every time. But it does! It had a Paul and an Origen and an Athanasius and an Augustine in the early days; it has had a Newton and a Kepler and a Faraday and a Clerk-Maxwell and a Tait and a Kelvin in these days of ours. The mightiest minds find in Christ their Master."

COMING TO JESUS

We know what attracted Nicodemus to Jesus. He came saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." It was

a confession, and, although it was an inadequate confession, it was sufficient to introduce the subject of religion.

Doubtless Nicodemus said other things to Jesus which are not recorded here. Nicodemus knew something about the teachings concerning the coming of the Kingdom, but he thought of the Kingdom in terms of national power, and Jesus explained to Nicodemus that his Kingdom was not of this world, but was spiritual. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It is not necessary for us to charge Nicodemus with cowardice because he came to Jesus in the night. He was a ruler and a man of position, and it may have been that he was acting prudently and with caution. On the other hand, the evening hour would give an opportunity for conference and quiet conversation. Nicodemus was a busy man and Jesus was busy, and the evening hour would afford an opportunity without interference to talk of the sacred things of the heart.

To Think About: When we wish to know about the deepest secrets of the gospel the best thing we can do is to do what Nicodemus did —go directly to Jesus. We can do this by sitting down in quietness, perhaps in the night, with our New Testament, and in prayer finding out what the mind of the Master really is.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Nicodemus began by acknowledging that Jesus was "a teacher come from God." He admitted that it would be impossible for anyone to do what Jesus had done except God was with him. Nicodemus wanted to know the nature of the Kingdom which Jesus would establish.

Jesus immediately told Nicodemus that his Kingdom was not like the kingdoms of the world. It did not belong to nations and it had a limitless sovereignty. It was not an affair of social betterment or economic improvement. It was spiritual, and to be a member of this Kingdom it was necessary to be born again. John 3: 3.

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. God reigns over a Kingdom of redeemed people, and to enter his Kingdom a new heart and a new spirit are needed. It is not a change of circumstances that is needed, but a change of heart. This teaching introduces us to the heart of Christianity. What the world is to a blind man the Kingdom of God is to him who has not been spiritually redeemed.

To Think About: In a little poem by Dora Greenwell, suggested by the tombstone of a man who died at the age of eighty, but who had been only four years a Christian, she says:

If you ask me how long I have been in the world, I'm old—I'm very old;
If you ask me how many years I've lived, it'll very soon be told—
Past eighty years of age, yet only four years old!

Y. P.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Nicodemus, who knew the teachings of his own religion thoroughly, was puzzled. The question on his lips was "How?" "How can a man be born when he is old? . . . How can these things be?" He represents the intellectual man who must be satisfied in his reason before he can surrender his heart. Jesus did not rebuke him or denounce him for asking questions that could not have a definite answer. He reasoned with him and illustrated his meaning.

Nicodemus may have been with Jesus for hours, and we feel from what followed in the life of Nicodemus that Jesus convinced him, and made things plain and clear to him. The new birth has nothing to do with the physical, but deals altogether with the spiritual.

It is a mystery, but it is a fact. John 3: 8. It belongs to the supernatural. It is God coming into the life of man, renewing his heart, his affections, and his will, and creating within him a "new man," a new character. "Old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."

To Think About: Salvation is a gift of God. We are recipients of his mercy and of his grace. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper symbolizes this when in the service we read the invitation, "Take, eat! this is my body, which is broken for you."

THE GIFT OF GOD

The lesson concludes with an illustration and a promise. The illustration is taken from the Old Testament. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." It is difficult to know where the words of Jesus stop and the words of John the Evangelist begin. Probably Nicodemus would understand the reference to the serpent in the wilderness. That serpent was lifted up in the midst of suffering and death and those who looked lived. Thus early in his life Jesus refers to his death upon the cross.

There is also a promise, the greatest promise that was ever given: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here is the message of the Bible in a single verse. It is a message of love and a message of life. How simple it is, and yet it contains the greatest words in religion: "God"; "world"; "love"; "believeth"; "eternal"; "life."

To Think About: We are accustomed to think about the gospel of love and about the greatest definition of God—"God is love." Here in this lesson we are introduced to this central gospel: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." You can read in Nansen's "Farthest North" that one day he dropped his line out into the depths until it all ran out. Writing the date in his journal,

with the length of his line, he added the note—"Deeper than that." The next day, adding to the line, he ran it out and still no bottom was touched, and again he wrote in his journal the date, the length of the line, and the added note—"Deeper than that." The following day he let out all the line he could lay his hands upon, and still it swung in the unplumbed depths, and again he wrote the words—"Deeper than that." So it is with the love of the eternal God.

THE CONVERSION OF NICODEMUS

This lesson does not tell us all there is to be known of Nicodemus. We must add to what is told in this chapter what is told elsewhere in John's Gospel. In John 7: 50-52, we find Nicodemus standing up for justice and fair play when Jesus was on trial in the council of the chief priests and the Pharisees. When the authorities were ready to deliver Jesus over to death Nicodemus said, "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?"

They charged him with ignorance; they silenced him with scorn. "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." We find Nicodemus later at the cross. The story is found in John 19: 39. After the death of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, who is always identified by John as the man who came to Jesus by night, took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with spices and laid it away in Joseph's new tomb.

This is a happy ending to the lesson. Jesus did not fail in winning Nicodemus to eternal devotion to him. Nicodemus experienced the new birth. He became a member of the Kingdom of God, and entered into eternal life. A man who could stand up for Jesus in the midst of his enemies, and who could claim his body after his death was surely not a coward.

To Think About: If a man will let Jesus speak to him as Nicodemus did, Christ will soon have his heart.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Was it courage or cowardice that prompted Nicodemus to interview Jesus in the night?
2. What is known about the subsequent history of Nicodemus?
3. If you were preaching a sermon on John 3: 16, what would be your main theme? Would you call John 3: 16 the greatest text in the Bible?
4. What essentials of the Christian life can we find in this lesson? For example: Conversion; faith; the Holy Spirit; the atonement.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

JESUS TALKS WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."—John 4: 24.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 4: 7-14, 24-26, 31-35

For entire lesson, see John 4: 4-42

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

7 There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a to draw water: Je'sus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food.

9 The Sa-mar'i-tan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Sa-mar'i-tan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Sa-mar'i-tans.)

10 Je'sus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou has nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Ja'cob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Je'sus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

* * * * *

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'ah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

26 Je'sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

* * * * *

31 In the mean while the disciples prayed him, saying, Rab'bi, eat.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

7 There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a to draw water: Je'sus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Sa-ma'ri-a unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Sa-ma'-ri-a? for the Jews have no dealings with the Sa-mar'i-tans.

10 Je'sus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Ja'cob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Je'sus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

* * * * *

24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'as cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Je'sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

* * * * *

31 ¶ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not.
33 The disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man brought him *aught* to eat?
34 Je'sus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.
35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.
33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?
34 Je'sus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.
35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Time—December, A.D. 27 **Place**—Sychar in Samaria

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. August 25. John 4: 4-14. Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman.
T. August 26. John 4: 24-38. White Harvest Fields.
W. August 27. Isa. 44: 3-8. The Spirit Promised.
T. August 28. John 7: 37-44. The Satisfying Christ.
F. August 29. Isa. 41: 17-20. God's Gracious Provision.
S. August 30. Hab. 2: 9-14. Earth Filled with the Truth.
S. August 31. Ps. 25: 1-7. "The God of My Salvation."

AT JACOB'S WELL

Jesus had been preaching about a year when the events of this lesson took place. He was on his way from Judea to Galilee, and he took the short route through Samaria. A Jew seldom went through Samaria, but Jesus, who was friendly with all people, went steadily on through the enemy's country.

The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. There was bitter rivalry between them. The Samaritans were a sort of half-breed people, who claimed that God had given his revelation to them in the five books of Moses only, and that Gerizim was the holy mountain where God should be worshiped. It was a standing dispute between Jews and Samaritans, this matter of religion, and there was bitter enmity and constant rivalry. The Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews. "At the passover season it was the custom of the Jews, by lighting bonfires on the Mount of Olives which was the signal for other bonfires from hill to hill until the Euphrates was reached, to send to the Jews in exile the message that it was passover time at home, and they were not forgotten. The Samaritans, like spiteful children, lighted rival bonfires on other days, so as to confuse the watchers in the East."

Jesus came in the heat of the day to Jacob's well at Sychar, a short distance from Shechem, known to-day as Nablus or Nabulus. The well is one of the best-located places of the Holy Land. It is seventy-five feet deep, nine feet in diameter, with a long, narrow neck. While his disciples went into the village to get food, Jesus sat weary and worn by the well. The verse gives us the suggestion of

utter weariness, perhaps not only because of the heat of the day and the long journey which he had taken, but because of the conditions and spirit of the people about him.

To Think About: This picture of the wearied Christ brings us face to face with the humanity of our Lord and his common needs. He was indeed "in all points tempted like as we are."

THE LIVING WATER

As he waited alone by the well, a woman of Samaria came to draw water, and this great chapter is given to us because of his wonderful interview with this obscure woman. In our last lesson, Jesus gave himself in all the richness of his revelation to Nicodemus, and here he gives himself to this Samaritan woman.

Nicodemus was a ruler, a Pharisee, a man of culture, of intelligence, and of influence. The Samaritan woman is nameless, a woman belonging to an unfriendly nation, her character obscured by shame and sin, and yet to her Jesus revealed the wonders of his love and the richness of his gospel. What a teacher he was, how tactful and wise in his approach! Perhaps she had drawn water from the well, or was about to do so.

Jesus broke the silence and the awkardness of the situation by making a simple request, "Give me to drink." One of the best ways to help people is to get them to do something for you. When some one asks a favor he becomes in a sense a servant. The woman was amazed and surprised at the request because he was a Jew and she was a Samaritan and a woman. "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" His answer to her was full of mystery and yet of charm: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

The conversation is very interesting. There is always a deep spirit of religion and instinct for God in every human heart, and Jesus led the woman on, step by step, from the water in Jacob's well to the living water of which, if a man drink, he will never thirst. That living water was not to be drawn out of the earth, but was within the heart itself. "Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

To Think About: In the last verses of the Bible we read the words: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Jesus is not only the Bread of life; he is the Water of life.

GOD IS SPIRIT

The woman half understood, half doubted. She said, "Give me this water." Jesus had awakened the longing of her heart for something deeper and better, but before he could give her the gift which would satisfy the deepest longings of her life, she must come face to face with her own need. Her life was not right. Before there can be forgiveness and redemption there must be cleansing and repentance, and so Jesus drove the sword of conviction into her heart.

This revelation of her innermost heart brought forth the confession, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," and then she began to enter into a discussion of religion from the point of view of controversy. When religion becomes too personal many people divert the issue by discussions concerning religious controversies.

The woman wished to draw Jesus into a discussion of the relative values of Mount Sinai and Mount Gerizim. Jesus ignored her discussion and said: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

God is everywhere. God is Spirit. He is not confined to place or to race or to nation. The gospel is not for the Jews or for the Samaritans. It is for the world.

To Think About: What do you mean when you say, "God is a Spirit"? There are three great definitions of God in the New Testament. "God is love"; "God is light"; "God is a Spirit." Spirit is always personal. That is to say, spirit wills, spirit feels, spirit thinks. God is a Person.

A CONFESSION OF FAITH

Jesus frankly told the woman that he was the Messiah. He said, "I that speak unto thee am he." She had given him the allegiance of her life and he had revealed himself to her, and satisfied the deepest longing of her soul. He had given to her the living water. When the disciples returned, they were amazed to find Jesus talking with the woman. A wondrous light had come into his face and his weariness had disappeared. He was no longer hungry or thirsty for he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not."

They thought that some one had given him something to eat, but Jesus told them the secret of his satisfaction. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." Not only was Jesus satisfied, but the woman was satisfied, and had found in him the satisfaction of her deepest desires.

To Think About: The religion of Buddhism says, "Whom thirst conquers, thirst the contemptible, for him will everything grow as the grass grows." This means that Buddhism desires the destruction

of thirst. Christianity, on the other hand, says, "You are right to thirst, but only God can satisfy your thirst."

THE COMING HARVEST

The woman went back to her people with the confession of her faith upon her lips, saying, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" Out of the city they came and kept coming to him. A mighty revival swept through that country, and looking upon the people as upon the harvest field, Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest."

If he alone could bring this one woman into the Kingdom, and through her bring the message of salvation to her people, what would happen if the harvest were full of laborers, and full of missionaries? This is a message for us to-day. The field is white and the laborers are few. We sometimes think of a country like Japan as in touch with the Christian gospel, and yet forty million of the people of Japan have never heard the message of the gospel or the story of Christ. Ninety per cent of the students of Japan are either agnostics or unbelievers.

To Think About: The influence of one life cannot be told in words. This one woman with her message, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" was a herald calling her own people to repentance and faith. One Christian in a home, one Christian home in a community, may be like a lighthouse in a dark night.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Compare the character of this Samaritan woman with that of Nicodemus and the way in which Jesus guided the thought of each.
2. The art of teaching is to lead from the known to the unknown. Show how great was the art which Jesus practiced in his interview with the Samaritan woman.
3. What does this lesson teach us about Jesus?
4. What does this lesson teach us about the nature of God?
5. Why would you say that the Samaritan woman became a true Christian?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

JESUS HEALS A NOBLEMAN'S SON

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."—John 14: 6.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 4: 46-54.

American Standard Version

46 He came therefore again unto Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Ca-per'an-um.

47 When he heard that Je'sus was come out of Ju-dæ'a into Gal'i-lee, he went unto him, and besought *him* that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

48 Je'sus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Je'sus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Je'sus spake unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived.

52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Je'sus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second sign that Je'sus did, having come out of Ju-dæ'a into Gal'i-lee.

Authorized Version

46 So Je'sus came again into Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Ca-per'na-um.

47 When he heard that Je'sus was come out of Ju-dæ'a into Gal'i-lee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Je'sus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Je'sus saith unto him, Go thy way; they son liveth. And the man believed the word that Je'sus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Je'sus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This *is* again the second miracle *that* Je'sus did, when he was come out of Ju-dæ'a into Gal'i-lee.

Time—December, A.D. 27. **Places**—Cana and Capernaum

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. September 1. John 4: 46-54. Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son.
T. September 2. II Kings 20: 1-7. God Heals a King.
W. September 3. Phil. 2: 25-30. Healing Shows God's Mercy.
T. September 4. Luke 5: 17-26. Healing Shows God's Power.
F. September 5. Isa. 38: 16-22. Healing Shows God's Love.
S. September 6. Matt. 9: 18-31. Faith for Healing.
S. September 7. Psalm 130. Hope for the Hopeless.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

In our last lesson Jesus was ministering to the woman of Samaria. The result of his ministry was that many people in Samaria believed on him, and it is interesting to read that they begged him to remain in Samaria. He remained in the village of Sychar and in that neighborhood for two full days, with the result that many more people believed on him.

It must have been a blessed experience to Jesus. He was weary, and here among these strange folk he found rest and friendship. The record of those two days is not given to us, but there must have been wonderful stories to tell. For those two days he was like a foreign missionary who brought the good news of the gospel to an outcast people.

Probably the great work that broke out in Samaria, recorded in the book of The Acts, may have had its roots in the ministry of Jesus during these two fruitful days. How true it is that those in foreign lands appreciate the gospel most! We do not wonder that missionaries long to return to the people who under their ministry have given their hearts to the Lord. Dr. Hunter Corbet returned to die in China, and Dr. S. Hall Young, whom we all know and love for his work in Alaska, has returned in his old age to Alaska, and tells his friends that he does not intend to come back to the United States.

To Think About: Love is the greatest key to the human heart. It was the love of Christ that strengthened Paul; it was his love that captured the Samaritans.

"Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my Friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring."

BACK TO GALILEE

Jesus had been performing great miracles in Jerusalem, and his fame had gone abroad through all the land; it had gone before him to Galilee and to his home. His name was on the lips of all the people. The verses that immediately precede our lesson suggest that Jesus returned to Galilee because "a prophet hath no honor in his own country." It is rather difficult to interpret these words which have become a proverb. Was his own country Judea or Galilee? Some students of the Scripture suggest that Judea, his birthplace, was his own country, and that he was leaving it because Jerusalem had rejected him.

On the other hand, others interpret the passage to mean Galilee, and

that he was returning there because he could be quiet and the people would not press upon him. It would seem from the statement in v. 45 that he was returning to Galilee conscious that the people would receive him because of what had been done in Jerusalem.

Godet, the New Testament commentator, says: "Meyer seems to us very near the truth when he explains thus: Jesus, knowing well that a prophet has no honor in his own country, began by gaining honor for himself beyond it, at Jerusalem, v. 45; and so it was that he now returned to Galilee with the reputation of a prophet, which gave him access to hearts in his country."

Jesus came to Cana, which was probably about twenty miles distant from Capernaum. Cana was the place where he had turned the water into wine, and where he had many friends.

To Think About: Is it easier to make a success of life at home or away from home? Are a young man's prospects better in his own town or city, or in a distant place where people do not know him?

THE KING'S OFFICER

While Jesus was at Cana a nobleman from Capernaum came, making a request of Jesus that he come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was at the point of death. Capernaum was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was situated on low land, and some form of fever had taken hold upon the lad. Dr. Geikie says: "The quantity of marshy land in the neighborhood of Capernaum, especially at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake, has made fever of a very malignant type at times the characteristic of the locality, so that the physicians would not allow Josephus, when hurt by his horse's sinking in the neighboring marsh, to sleep even a single night in Capernaum, but hurried him on to Taricheæ."

The nobleman was an officer of the king, probably in the court of Herod Antipas, and was doubtless some high officer, civil or military authority. We read in Luke 8: 3 that one of the followers of Jesus was "Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward."

The appeal to Jesus on the part of a father always reached sympathetic ears. Jesus was fond of children, and there is no appeal that goes home to the heart with more force than the appeal of suffering on the part of children. It is usually possible to get help for a children's hospital.

To Think About: This man in a high position sought help where help was to be found. He came directly to Jesus. F. W. Robertson says: "Times of sorrow and deepest need lead us to Christ. When no earthly power can aid us, we turn to the One who has all power and love. Many a one has gone to Christ from a sense of want and conscious helplessness."

THE NOBLEMAN'S PRAYER

The nobleman's request to Jesus was very simple. He asked Jesus to come down, that is from Cana to Capernaum, and heal his son, who was at the point of death. The nobleman's request was urgent, sincere, and definite. It was a short prayer, and expected a definite response.

He wanted Jesus to come to his home because he felt that it was necessary for the Master to be present in order that a cure might be effected. Jesus, as he often did, tried the man's faith. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe." One of the difficulties Jesus found was idle curiosity and the expectation on the part of people to see wonders created by his power.

The nobleman, however, still persisted, "Sir, come down ere my child die." He was too sure of his faith and too urgent in his need to discuss the "why" of it. He merely wished healing, and he knew that Jesus had that gift in his power. At the same time he still felt it necessary for Jesus to be present in order that the cure might be wrought.

To Think About: Have we faith that prayer can be answered, even though Jesus is no longer in the flesh? Recall the words of the hymn:

"I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,
That his arm had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen his kind look when he said,
'Let the little ones come unto me.'

"Yet still to his footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in his love;
And if I now earnestly seek him below,
I shall see him and hear him above."

THE NOBLEMAN'S FAITH

Jesus immediately answered the man's faith. He said, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." It was not only a promise, it was a command, and it is interesting to read that the nobleman immediately believed the words of Jesus, and went on his way homeward.

His faith had triumphed. He began by believing in the signs and wonders of the Master. He ended by believing his word. The highest form of faith is to believe in Jesus for his own sake. To Thomas, Jesus said: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Faith calls for obedience. It is taking Jesus at his word.

To Think About: Meditate on these words of Henry Drummond: "So far as I can see, there is only one way in which faith is got, and it is the same in the religious world as it is in the world of men and women. I learn to trust you, my brother, as I come to know you. I watch you; I live with you; I find out that you are trustworthy; and I come to trust myself to you, and lean upon you."

THE SECOND SIGN

This miracle was the second which Jesus performed in the village of Cana. It was not the second miracle which he wrought, for he had been working miracles not only in Galilee but in Jerusalem, but this was the second miracle which he wrought at Cana, the first being the changing of the water into wine.

John speaks of miracles as "signs," and it is easy to discover what he means. A miracle is like an acted parable. The miracle of the changing of water into wine is a sign of Christ's ability to satisfy the deepest longings of life to the fullest degree. This second miracle is a sign of Christ's power to heal. That power knows no limitations of place or of time. His word is law, and it is interesting to remember that healing came immediately at his word.

The nobleman was met by his servants with the joyful news that his son lived, and when he inquired as to the time of the cure they replied, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." "So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house." The miracle was an outward sign of the power of Christ to heal and to cleanse the spirit, and the result of his kindness and love and sympathy was that the ruler and all his household believed.

To Think About: Select the miracles recorded in The Gospel According to John and point out their significance as signs.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Give examples of people worthy of honor who have been without honor in their own country.
2. Select examples of persons who through sorrow and affliction have gone to God for help.
3. Explain the words of Dr. A. B. Bruce: "Persons who sigh because the age of miracles is past, and who think that a revival of faith would regain signs and wonders for the Church, ought to observe that the very object of the miracles was to render themselves unnecessary."
4. What is faith? Memorize the answer in the Shorter Catechism: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."
5. Make a list of Jesus' miracles, and try to understand why they were performed.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.

JESUS DRIVEN FROM NAZARETH

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "He anointed me to preach good tidings."—Luke 4: 18.

TEXT OF LESSON, Luke 4: 16-30.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

16 And he came to Naz'a-reth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet I-sa'-iah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Jo'seph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Ca-per'na-um, do also here in thine own country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country.

25 But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Is'ra-el in the days of E-li'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land;

26 And unto none of them was E-li'jah sent, but only to Zar'e-phath, in the land of Si'don, unto a woman that was a widow.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

16 ¶ And he came to Naz'a-reth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet E-sa'-ias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Jo'seph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Ca-per'-na-um, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Is'ra-el in the days of E-li'as, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was E-li'as sent, save unto Sa-rep'ta, *a city* of Si'don, unto a woman *that was* a widow.

27 And there were many lepers in Is'ra-el in the time of E-li'sha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'a-man the Syr'i-an.

28 And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things;

29 And they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

27 And many lepers were in Is'ra-el in the time of El-i-se'us the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Na'a-man the Syr'i-an.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Time—April, A.D. 28 **Place**—Nazareth

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. September 8. Luke 4: 16-21. Jesus' Inaugural.
T. September 9. Luke 4: 22-30. Jesus Driven from Nazareth.
W. September 10. John 1: 9-14. "His Own Received Him Not."
T. September 11. John 5: 37-47. The Jews Disbelieve.
F. September 12. Luke 22: 66-71. The Chief Priests Disbelieve.
S. September 13. John 7: 1-9. Christ's Brethren Disbelieve.
S. September 14. Isa. 61: 1-3, 10, 11. Christ's Mission.

BACK TO NAZARETH

It was a great day for the people of Nazareth when Jesus returned home. He had been absent for many months, but tidings of his words and his works had come to them from afar. The voice of John the Baptist had been silenced, and for a month he had been imprisoned on the shores of the Dead Sea, but Jesus had gone from success to success until the whole country was aroused by his words and by his message, and his own native town was eager to see him do the things which he had done elsewhere.

It is a great thing for a young man to return home after he has made his mark in the world. This was not the feeling, however, which inspired Jesus. He was returning to his own home with a feeling of responsibility weighing heavily upon him.

The first thing recorded of him after he returned home was that according to his custom he attended a synagogue service on the Sabbath. That is a fine thing to record. We wonder if young men and women who return from college are back in the old home church the first Sunday after their return. This is worth thinking about. If anyone had an excuse for staying away from church, Jesus had that excuse. The church of his day was uninteresting, and he surely had fellowship with God in a way that those who attended the synagogue could never understand.

To Think About: The word for "custom" occurs five times in the Gospel According to Luke, four times in connection with the life of

Christ: "After the custom of the law," Jesus was taken to the Temple when he was a baby; "After the custom of the feast," Jesus went to Jerusalem at the age of twelve; "As his custom was," he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day; "As his custom was," he went up on the mount to pray. Home habits, church habits, prayer habits! What are your habits?

JESUS AT SCHOOL

The synagogue originated during the Babylonian Captivity. When the exiles returned to Palestine, a synagogue, which was the village church and village school, was erected in every village and town. The service on the Sabbath consisted of prayers and responses, the singing of psalms, the reading of the Law or the Prophets, an address, and closed with a short prayer.

Liberty of teaching and preaching was given in the synagogue, and any distinguished person who was present was asked to participate in the service. It was customary to stand up to read, and to sit down to speak. Jesus, of course, was asked to participate in the service, and, taking the roll of one of the Prophets, he quickly found the place. He knew the Bible, for it was his only book, and he was familiar with the passages which meant most to him. The passage as it is recorded in the lesson follows the Greek text, and it may have been the Greek Version from which our Lord was reading. The passage to which Jesus turned was in Isa., ch. 61, and the words as he read them thrilled with a new meaning.

To Think About: It is our duty to take part in worship. Worship is not passive. It is active. We are not spectators. We are participants. We lose much if we do not enter heartily into the singing and Scripture readings of the entire service.

JESUS AS A PREACHER

It is interesting to study the lesson from the point of view of the preacher and his sermon. First of all, he read a text that was full of meaning. It pulsated with hope and faith and love. It is an epitome of the gospel. It contains a message of comfort and of life.

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives."

Here is a gospel for all who suffer and for all who hope. It is a personal gospel; it is a social gospel; it is a missionary gospel; but the most interesting thing about the sermon which our Lord preached that day in his own home synagogue where he had so often worshiped as a boy, was that when he came to interpret the Scripture he said, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

To Think About: Every true sermon finds its way to Christ. A sermon that is essentially Christian always leads to Christ himself. You can test a sermon in this way.

THE SERMON APPLICATION

The sermon was a great success. All the people without hesitation were amazed at the gracious words which Jesus spoke. We are not told all what he said. We know, however, that he spoke words of sweetness and light. The passage in Isaiah, if continued, would contain the words, "and the day of vengeance of our God." These words Jesus did not read. His message is a message of hope and love, and not a message of wrath and vengeance.

Doubtless John the Baptist would not have omitted them. Jesus, however, came to preach "good tidings of great joy," and his words were full of grace and truth. The people were perplexed and amazed, and all they could say was, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They could not understand. They knew Jesus. He had been brought up in their midst. He had worked with them and for them, and they were not prepared to surrender their hearts to him and to trust him as their Lord.

To Think About: The most important thing about a sermon is its application. John applied his sermon to Herod, and the result was that he was imprisoned. After preaching his little sermon to David, Nathan immediately applied it. Pointing his finger at the king he said, "Thou art the man."

THE EFFECT OF JESUS' SERMON

Jesus did not wait for the people to ask him any question. He knew the question that was in their mind. It was some such question as this, "Who art thou?" and so he said, "Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country."

Jesus, however, refused to work any sign or miracle to satisfy their curiosity and he explained his attitude by using two well-known Old Testament illustrations. See I Kings, ch. 17, and II Kings 5: 1-9. He told them that in the days of the famine in Israel in the time of Elijah, God passed by the people of Israel and sent Elijah to a widow beyond the boundaries of Palestine. He told them that leprosy abounded in the time of Elisha the prophet, and that the only person that was cleansed was Naaman, and he was a Syrian.

The people understood him. Jesus had been in Samaria and had ministered to the people there, and was continually ministering to outcasts and publicans, but in his own home city he was unable on account of their unbelief to minister unto them, and so in a moment the synagogue was in an uproar and the people were filled with wrath and indignation.

To Think About: Luther somewhere said, "The Word of God is a sword, is a war, is a poison, is a scandal, is a stumblingblock, is a ruin." He meant that the Word of God was all this to those who opposed the gospel message.

LEAVING HIS HOME

The audience was so infuriated against Jesus that "they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong." Near Nazareth is a perpendicular rock forty to fifty feet high, and from this rock they expected to hurl Jesus to his death.

Whether it was because of a miracle or merely because of the courage of Jesus and the majesty of his presence which overawed the people Jesus went his way in safety, and, leaving Nazareth, passed down to Capernaum. The rage of the people did not silence him or frighten him. He was not angry but distressed because of their unbelief. Toward the end of his life he looked upon Jerusalem and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

In some such manner must he have felt about his own city of Nazareth. The very place that should have acknowledged him, disowned him. May it not be true that America, that has received so much from the gospel, may be held doubly responsible in the Day of Judgment?

To Think About: Faith is mutual. We read that Jesus could do no mighty works in Galilee because of the unbelief of the people. See Matt. 13: 58; Mark 6: 6; 16: 14.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. What sort of sermon do you like best? Tell when and where you heard such a sermon.
2. What is the best way to test a sermon?
3. Why should preachers always choose a text?
4. Where did Jesus find the text for his sermon which he preached in his own home synagogue?
5. Why did the people of Nazareth reject Jesus?
6. What reasons did Jesus have for refusing to work miracles at Nazareth?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

JESUS MAKES A MISSIONARY TOUR

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou canst make me clean."—Mark 1: 40.

TEXT OF LESSON, Mark 1: 35-45.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

36 And Si'mon and they that were with him followed after him;

37 And they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee.

38 And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth.

39 And he went into their synagogues throughout all Gal'i-lee, preaching and casting out demons.

40 And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean.

42 And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean.

43 And he strictly charged him, and straightway sent him out,

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Mo'ses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Je'sus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Si'mon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Gal'i-lee, and cast out devils.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Je'sus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Mo'ses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Je'sus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

Time—April, May, A.D. 28 **Place**—Galilee

DAILY HOME READINGS

M.	September 15.	Mark 1: 35-45.	Jesus Makes a Missionary Tour
T.	September 16.	Acts 10: 34-43.	The Missionary Pattern.
W.	September 17.	Matt. 28: 16-20.	Christ's Parting Command.
T.	September 18.	Matt. 25: 34-40.	Helping People.
F.	September 19.	Isa. 60: 1-11.	A Missionary Call.
S.	September 20.	Luke 19: 29-40.	The Persistence of the Gospel.
S.	September 21.	Ps. 65: 1-7.	"Unto Thee Shall All Flesh Come."

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

This is the second lesson in the quarter taken from the Gospel According to Mark. Mark's Gospel is the most graphic of all the Gospels, and leads us on from event to event with startling rapidity. Mark's characteristic word is "straightway," and it is found in vs. 42, 43 of our lesson.

It is interesting to note that Mark, in the first chapter of his Gospel, makes a record of what Jesus was doing in the second year of his public ministry when he had given a full year of service. Mark precedes the story of the lesson with an account of the various miracles which Jesus performed after the calling of his first disciples. The record is general, but reflects a remarkable and miraculous service. Mark 1: 32-34.

To Think About: Jesus liked to be alone. He frequently left the crowd in order to find solitude. Mr. Moody used to say, "Character is what a man is in the dark." True spiritual growth is developed when the soul is at peace with itself and God.

JESUS, A MAN OF PRAYER

Jesus had been spending himself in helping others, and our lesson begins with a statement of the fact that Jesus himself needed help. He was an early riser and a great while before day, he rose up and, leaving the disciples asleep, went out into a desert place. It was not that he loved nature and sunrise, but because he longed to be alone in prayer with God.

Prayer is the attitude of the soul to God. It is the relation which we sustain to deity.

To Think About: "Mark, with rapid pen, relates the ceaseless activity of this wonderful Servant of the Father. John, with imprisoned body, but with rare liberty of vision, from the glory side revealed on Patmos, depicts the Son of God coming on an errand from the Father into the world, and again leaving the world and going back home unto the Father."

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

The disciples apparently kept very close watch on Jesus, and they soon discovered his habits and the deepest motives of his life. They must have been surprised when they awoke and found that he was gone. Probably they knew where to find him, for they lost no time in discovering his whereabouts.

They were not surprised to find him in prayer. Later in the ministry of Jesus the disciples came to him, saying, "Teach us to pray." They had discovered that prayer was the driving power of the life of our Lord. At this period they had not entered into that deepest of all experiences. They merely felt that Jesus was neglecting his opportunity. They came saying, "All are seeking thee."

Popularity, however, was not one of the motives which determined the character and career of Jesus. Prayer was such a motive. Popularity is always dangerous. If possible read Robert Browning's poem, "The Patriot," to see how a person may rise and fall on a tidal wave of popularity. One of the profoundest scholars of the New Testament speaks thus of popularity:

"Most of the criticism starts with the assumption that the Church ought to be popular. Surely this is an extraordinary presupposition, when we realize by experience that selfishness is the most potent force in average human nature. The marvel is that in the apparently darkest ages of Christianity from the first century up to the present, genuine divine life can be traced in the most unlikely surroundings. All through its history in the world it has been mainly supported and propagated by unknown men and women, often simple and diffident, who have had the vision of the glory of Jesus Christ, and for whom that has overshadowed all else besides. Human society is being driven by hard and ruthless forces, to recognize that the cure of its pain and dissatisfaction is not to be expected from the progress of thought or the advances of science, but from a whole-hearted allegiance to him who pleased not himself, and who was therefore able to say: 'Learn of me; . . . for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'"

To Think About:

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

JESUS AS A MISSIONARY

It was not curiosity to which Jesus responded when he left his retreat, but human necessity. The call of the multitude and the need of the people about him urged him to go forth on his mission of mercy. He could not be alone long, but he had been alone with God long enough to renew his strength and to receive a fresh vision of God.

Immediately he said: "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons." We are not sure what Jesus meant by the words, "For to this end came I forth." The words might suggest that he had left the city for the purpose of preaching in the village towns in the country, or, what is more likely, the words suggest that he had come forth from God for the very purpose of ministering to human need.

To Think About: What does a crowd suggest to you? When Jesus saw a crowd, he had compassion on the people. They lacked purpose. Dr. Francis J. Hall, in the delirium of his last illness, was overheard to say, "I hear them calling." He, too, saw the great, unshepherded multitude.

JESUS AS A PHYSICIAN

In one of the unnamed villages Jesus met a leper who, coming to him, knelt down and besought him, saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Leprosy was common in Bible times. Minute regulations were given regarding persons afflicted with leprosy. See Lev., ch. 13.

Jesus ministered again and again to lepers, and it is interesting in this connection to notice that the record reads that he was not only "moved with compassion," but that "he stretched forth his hand, and touched him," and said, "I will; be thou made clean." Christianity has always followed the example of Jesus, and wonderful missions to the lepers throughout the world have been successfully carried on.

Wherever the principles of the gospel dominate the thoughts and spirits of men, there is no such thing as an outcast people. Jesus is not repelled. He is attracted toward human need and human sorrow.

To Think About: It is interesting to note the characteristic attitude of the leper. Matthew tells us that he came and "worshipped him." Luke tells us that he "fell on his face." Mark, in our lesson, shows him "kneeling down" to our Lord. The interesting thing about this man was his faith. It was his faith that appealed to Jesus. The leper said, "If thou wilt, thou canst." Jesus said, "I will."

THE DEMAND FOR SILENCE

Having healed the leper Jesus strictly charged the man to keep silence, and sent him away. His command was explicit, "See thou say nothing to any man: but go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

Jesus had come to the place where popularity hindered him in his mission. He was surrounded with lepers and with sickness and suffering on all hands. We might readily ask the question why he did not heal all the sick and all the lepers in Palestine. He did not do this, however. He laid his hand only upon one here and there, and in this case ordered the man to keep quiet about his cure.

Of course, the conditions were temporary, and in our day we are commanded to publish abroad the glad tidings of our salvation. We are not to be silent. We are to speak, and indeed, as in the case of this man, it is impossible for those who have known the gracious goodness of the Lord to keep silence.

To Think About: The great caution which Jesus exercises concerning his ministry shows us how sane he was in all things that concerned himself and his disciples. He did not seek for the applause of the multitude. He did not come to satisfy curiosity. He came to seek and to save the lost, and popularity might hinder him in his mission of mercy.

THE ATTRACTION OF JESUS

Contrary to the advice given by Jesus the man went forth to publish and to spread abroad the matter. The result was that Jesus could no more openly enter the city, but had to carry on his mission in desert places. He did not seek popular approval. They came once to him to make him a king, and he fled from them and went into retirement. Nevertheless Jesus could not hide himself, and the lesson concludes with the interesting words, "and they came to him from every quarter."

There is an attraction about Jesus which is unavoidable. Dr. Dawson calls him the "unavoidable Christ." His claims cannot be silenced. The charm of his winsomeness cannot be hidden. He stands in the midst of the world's need and says, "Come unto me," and from all nations and from all classes of people millions have come and are still coming.

To Think About: Memorize the following stanzas:

"O Hope of every contrite heart,
O Joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!

"But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but his loved ones know."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus leave his disciples in order to pray? Why is private prayer essential in the Christian life?
2. What was Jesus' purpose in avoiding the cities and working in small villages?
3. What service to-day can be done in small villages that cannot be done in cities?
4. What interests you most about the leper whom Jesus healed? Can you determine Jesus' reasons for asking the leper to keep silent about his cure? Do these reasons maintain to-day?
5. What is there about Jesus which attracts all men to him?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

REVIEW: OPENING PERIOD OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John 3: 16.

DEVOTIONAL READING, Isa., ch. 55.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. September 22. John 3: 7-17. The Purpose of Christ's Coming.
T. September 23. Luke 2: 7-16. The Birth of Jesus.
W. September 24. Luke 2: 41-52. The Boyhood of Jesus.
T. September 25. Mark 1: 1-11. The Baptism of Jesus.
F. September 26. Matt. 4: 1-11. The Temptation of Jesus.
S. September 27. John 1: 35-45. First Followers of Jesus.
S. September 28. Isa., ch. 55. God's Invitation

THE LESSONS OF THE QUARTER

We have been studying the life of Christ for three months. We have finished the one quarter. This quarter's lessons are to be continued for a second and a third quarter, until the life of our Lord is concluded. The lessons this quarter have been taken from the four Gospels; one lesson from Matthew; three from Luke; two from Mark; and six from John.

The lessons studied have taken us over our Lord's life to April, A.D. 28, and have covered the story of his birth, his childhood, his baptism, and temptation, and have introduced us to his public ministry. The lessons may be grouped around the places where we find Jesus in the lessons studied.

Bethlehem. The first lesson was about the birth of Jesus. It contained the story of how the shepherds heard the song of the angels, and journeyed in the night to the place where the Child Jesus lay in the manger. The story means that God was in Christ. The people were looking for a great king, for some one who would rule over them, and reëstablish the independence of Israel among the nations. They did not expect the Messiah to come in the form of a helpless little Child. But God's way is to begin small. He believes in little things. Jesus himself put a little child in the center of his Kingdom, and the Christ-child has become the Saviour and Lord of all.

To Think About: The Golden Text: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 11.

Nazareth. The second lesson takes us to Nazareth. Nazareth was the home of Joseph and Mary, and there Jesus was brought up. Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus as a young man worked at that trade. Later in life they said, "Is not this the carpenter?" At twelve years of age a revealing incident took place. He was made "a son of the law" in the Temple at Jerusalem, and there he was lost. When his mother found him she remonstrated with him and Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" It was a suggestion of mystery and shows us

that even in his boyhood Jesus was conscious of strength stirring at his heart and an understanding of the mission and work which lay before him. He grew up, however, in the Nazareth home, and developed into normal and natural manhood.

To Think About: The Golden Text: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."—Luke 2: 52.

Jordan. When Jesus came to the age of thirty he went forth to be baptized of John the Baptist in the River Jordan. John and Jesus were related, and John's ministry produced a mighty revival among all classes of the people. The baptism of Jesus was his call to public service. At his baptism a sign was given to John by which he knew that the Christ had come, and the sign was given to Jesus by which he understood that he was accepted of the Father, and that his ministry and mission in life had come.

To Think About: The Golden Text: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."—Mark 1: 11.

The Wilderness. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness. There, for forty days, he was alone. The Spirit of God led him into the wilderness and there he was tested and tried. What this testing was we readily recognize. All power had been given unto him, and power is always a responsibility. How would Jesus use his power? Would he use it for selfish purposes and make bread out of stones? Would he use it for spectacular purposes and cast himself down from the Temple tower? Would he use it for worldly purposes so that he might gain in the world's way the homage of all the kingdoms of the world? This was the temptation. It rested upon the words of the Tempter, "If thou art the Son of God." Jesus, however, obtained the victory over the Tempter by appealing to the Word of God, and chose the path that led to the cross. The same temptation came to him later. It returned to him for the last time when the people said to him, "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross."

To Think About: The Golden Text: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."—Heb. 2: 18.

The Jordan. The fifth lesson introduced us to Jesus on his return to the Jordan after his temptation, and there he was pointed out by John as the Messiah. Immediately the disciples who had followed John the Baptist left him to follow their new Master. First, there were Andrew and John, and then Peter and probably James, and then later Philip and Nathanael. One by one these men gathered around Jesus and became disciples to the end. Later on he selected twelve men to be with him in his public ministry. Jesus worked with individuals.

To Think About: The Golden Text: "Jesus saith unto him, Follow me."—John 1: 43.

Cana of Galilee. Two lessons belong to Cana of Galilee, and each lesson tells the story of a miracle. The first miracle performed at Cana was the changing of the water into wine. The second miracle, which is the tenth lesson of the quarter, was the healing of the nobleman's son. A miracle is merely one of the acts of our Lord. He did not break any law of nature or interfere with any principle. He merely exerted his own power and brought into play a higher law. What we call laws of nature are, after all, only the ways in which God himself works.

To Think About: The Golden Texts:
(1) "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."—John 2: 5.
(2) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."—John 14: 6.

Jerusalem. The seventh and eighth lessons are located in Jerusalem. Jesus cleansed the Temple of dishonesty and called men to reverence and prayer. The early chapters of John's Gospel, and indeed the most of John's Gospel, record the ministry of Jesus in the neighborhood of, or in the city of Jerusalem itself. There he met with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews who came to him by night. Jesus' ministry was mostly with persons. He called them by their names. He won them one by one. Sometimes they were poor; sometimes they were rich. Nicodemus was a man of influence and prestige, and later on, as we discover, he became a believer in our Lord. In this lesson occurs the greatest of all the texts of the New Testament, John 3: 16.

To Think About: The Golden Texts: (1) "My house shall be called a house of prayer."—Matt. 21: 13.
(2) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John 3: 16.

Samaria. Samaria was really a foreign country to the Jews. Samaria had been populated by Assyria when the Northern Kingdom had been destroyed. The Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews. Nevertheless Jesus found the Samaritan woman a ready listener to his message, and he left behind him after two days' ministry in Samaria a great band of devout followers and friends. In this lesson occurs Jesus' great definition of God, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

To Think About: The Golden Text—"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."—John 4: 24.

Nazareth. The eleventh lesson finds Jesus back in his home at Nazareth. It is interesting to remember that between his baptism and this lesson lies a great period in which Jesus had become known

to all the people of Palestine by his words and works. His fame had gone through all the land and his home people, of course, were interested in him and anxious to see him with their own eyes perform miracles similar to those which he had performed elsewhere. Jesus, however, would not satisfy their curiosity. He preached to them a sermon in their own synagogue, revealing the purpose of his life and the purpose of the Messiahship, and announced that he had come to fulfill the prophet's message. They drove him from their synagogue, and tried to kill him. This was the reception which he received in his own home.

To Think About: The Golden Text: "He anointed me to preach good tidings."—Luke 4:18.

Galilee. The popularity of Jesus had grown so much that he had to avoid the cities. The ministry in the twelfth lesson is among the obscure villages and country towns of Galilee. There he ministered to the multitude, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and attracting to him people from every quarter. It is easy to picture the scene, and it is easy to understand how Jesus needed solitude and retirement for private and personal prayer so that his life might be kept sweet and his power undiminished.

To Think About: The Golden Text: "Thou canst make me clean."—Mark 1:40.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Trace in outline the places visited by Jesus.
2. Name all the people mentioned in the quarter's lessons.
3. How were Jesus and his disciples supported in a financial way during his public ministry?
4. Why did Jesus have his disciples with him always?
5. What is the most interesting lesson of the quarter, and why?
6. What is a miracle? What was Jesus' attitude toward the miracles which he himself wrought?

CORRELATED TOPICS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETINGS OR EXPRESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Topic for July 6, 1924. Jesus as King. Matt. 2: 1-12

THE KING OF THE JEWS

1. When Jesus was born in a lowly stable at Bethlehem, the Jews failed to recognize him as their king. Why?
2. For what sort of king were the Jews looking?
3. What other events attending the birth of Jesus showed him to be a rejected King?

THE KING RECEIVES HOMAGE

1. Who, from distant lands, came to worship the King of the Jews?
2. The Wise Men were not Jews. What is the significance of this fact?
3. What portion of the world do the Wise Men represent?

THE KING OF KINGS

1. How do you know that Jesus is to be the King of all peoples?
2. What facts from mission fields lead you to believe that he is becoming King of all nations?
3. What special claim, if any, do white people, in contrast to people of other colors, have on Christ?
4. What portion of The Lord's Prayer points to the universality of Christ's rule?
5. What value does Christ place upon the soul of a Chinese coolie as compared with the value that he puts on the soul of a well-to-do American?

SOME POSSIBLE PROJECTS

Read the story of some Chinese, Japanese, or Indian dweller in a non-Christian land who has helped to spread the rule of the King of kings. For example: Neesima or Kagawa of Japan; Dr. Mary Stone or Dr. Ida Kahn of China.

Make a survey of work of Negro or Chinese people in your own community, and as a society plan to do something for them.

Topic for July 13, 1924. The Home and the Nation. Matt. 2: 11a; Luke 2: 40, 41

JESUS AT HOME

1. Where was Jesus born? Where was Jesus' home?
2. Read Mark 6: 3, and then tell how many members we know of in the family of Jesus.
3. During the years of Jesus' ministry, he did not have a permanent home. At whose home did Jesus stay occasionally? Luke 10: 38. Why did he like to go there?

The Home and Its Influence

1. Which do you think is most important as a means of Christian education—the home, the church, the school, or the motion-picture theater? Why?
2. What can you say in regard to a mother's influence for good?
3. To what extent may parents give their children a Christian training?
4. How may brothers and sisters influence one another for good?
5. What should be the ideals of a Christian home?

The Home Developing Citizenship

1. What sort of nation would this be if every home were Christian?
2. How does a Christian home show the spirit of Christ?
3. What is the relation of the home to Christian citizenship?

Some Possible Projects

Do something toward trying to establish a family altar in your own home or, if you already have the family altar in your home, try to persuade a friend to establish the same custom in his home.

Find some local service and agency which is trying to better conditions in the homes of your own community, and volunteer for service in connection with it.

Topic for July 20, 1924. The Greatness of Humility. John 3: 22-30

Willing to Decrease

1. Tell what you know of John the Baptist.
2. What place did he hold in reference to Jesus Christ?
3. What changed John the Baptist's place as a prophet?
4. With what spirit did John the Baptist accept the change?

A Homely Virtue

1. What other Bible characters possessed the virtue of humility?
2. How does humility make a man great?
3. Give illustrations of humility in history outside the Bible.

Making the Virtue Ours

1. How can we acquire humility?
2. What in the account of John the Baptist has helped you to become humble?
3. What in the account of the life of Christ has helped you to become humble? Note Jesus' humility in being baptized by John.
4. How does service for Christ tend to make us humble?

A Possible Project

Undertake some form of service to those in the community who are neglected.

Topic for July 27, 1924. Overcoming Temptation. Matt. 4: 8-11

How Jesus Overcame

1. What use of Scripture did Jesus make during his temptation?
2. What use of prayer did Jesus make in time of temptation? Recall his Gethsemane experience.
3. When tempted, what use did Jesus make of work? Read Mark 1: 32-39.

Being Tempted

1. Why is it wrong to say that God tempts us? James 1: 13, 14.
2. How does God test us through trial? James 1: 2, 3.
3. How do evil desires in the heart make it dangerous to be tempted?

"More Than Conquerors"

1. Why is it helpful in overcoming temptation to have the heart and the mind filled with Scripture?
2. How does the Bible-reading and prayer habit help?
3. How is the Spirit-filled life enabled to overcome temptation? Try "the practice of the presence of God."
4. How does the company you keep help or hinder in overcoming temptation?
5. What good books have helped in overcoming temptation?
6. How do work and service help in conquering temptation?

A Possible Project

Let the society purchase Amos R. Wells's "Help for the Tempted." Let each member read it, and then pass it to others.

Topic for August 3, 1924. Winning Others to Christ. John 1: 40-42

Winning One

1. Whom did Andrew win to Christ?
2. What do you know about Andrew?
3. Tell what you know about Peter.
4. What would the Church have missed if Andrew had not found his own brother? What would Peter have missed?
5. What can you say as to the value of the hand-picking method of winning others to Christ?

How We May Win Others

1. What is the first requisite in becoming a soul-winner?
2. What is meant by "personal work"?
3. Why is personal work the hardest kind of Christian service?

4. What special preparation, if any, is needed for doing personal work?
5. What place has the Bible in winning souls to Christ?
6. What is meant by a "passion for souls"? Why is it essential in soul-winning?
7. What is tact, and why is it essential in personal work?
8. What objections are you likely to meet in doing personal work?
9. What are some of the rewards of doing personal work?

A Possible Project

Plan to coöperate with the Sunday school in an effort to make Decision Day a success, or help in any other plan which the Church may have to win souls.

Topic for August 10, 1924. Sociability and a Useful Life. John 2: 1, 2

The Sociability of Jesus

1. Why do you think Jesus came to the wedding at Cana?
2. What leads you to think that Jesus liked to be with people?
3. To what extent did Jesus mingle with all classes?
4. Who sat with Jesus at Matthew's house? Matt. 9: 10. What was their social standing?
5. In what class would you put Joseph of Arimathæa; the wife of Herod's steward; the rich young ruler?
6. Classify the disciples socially and show how their standing bears on Jesus' sociability.
7. Jesus talked with the learned Nicodemus and with the unlettered peasants. What does this indicate?
8. What incident when Jesus was on the cross shows the great sweep of his touch with people? Luke 23: 42, 43.

Living with Others

1. What advantage is there in being clannish? What disadvantage?
2. How does prejudice keep one class of people from mingling with another class?
3. What has the caste system done for India?

Developing Sociability

1. Why is it good to associate with various classes of people?
2. Why is Christlike love for humanity necessary if our social contacts are to be worth while?
3. What can be done to develop sociability?

A Possible Project

Let the Social Committee plan a series of socials.

Topic for August 17, 1924. Righteous Anger and a Useful Life. John 2: 13-16

"A Scourge of Cords"

1. What did Jesus find going on in the Temple? John 2:14.
2. What was wrong with the Temple traffic?
3. What did Jesus think of it?
4. What effect did his righteous indignation have in this instance?

Hating Evil

1. There is a wrath which belongs to God alone. Rom. 12:19. What place is there for righteous indignation in our lives?
2. What are some of the things at which a Christian should be indignant?
3. What is the danger of viewing evils without being indignant?
4. When Moses killed the Egyptian, Ex. 2:12, how did his anger run beyond its rightful bounds?
5. If we are indignant at some evil in our city or community, what should we do about it?

A Possible Project

Let the society select some one to make a report on an evil in the city or in the community. Plan to help in the overthrow of this evil.

Topic for August 24, 1924. Religious Experience and a Useful Life. John 3: 1-17

Men Born Again

1. By what different names is the change wrought by a genuine Christian experience called?
2. How did the term, "second birth," originate?
3. Why is it necessary to have a spiritual birth?
4. What change came upon Paul? Acts 9: 17.
5. What came into the life of John, the disciple?
6. How was Peter's life changed by his religious experience? John 1:42.
7. What is the relation between salvation of the soul and an efficient life of service?

The World's Need of Rebirth

1. Why is educational, medical, and industrial missionary work subordinate to evangelistic work?
2. What conditions in your knowledge of the world mission field lead you to believe that the greatest need is spiritual rebirth?
3. What instance of conversion in Japan can you point out? What have been the results?
4. What is the relation of Christianity to standards of living?

Some Possible Projects

Trace one definite change wrought in western society by Christianity. Be concrete.

Name one situation, institution, or custom in our life to-day that could not endure if we actually applied the spirit of Christ to it. Are there ways in which we can help to change this condition?

Topic for August 31, 1924. True Courtesy and a Useful Life. John 4: 1-26

The Courtesy of Jesus

1. Jesus, whose disciples were baptizing, left Judea where John the Baptist was baptizing. Vs. 1, 2. What does this show in regard to Jesus' courtesy?
2. How does the true courtesy of Jesus compare with the false courtesy of the Pharisees?
3. How did the courtesy of Jesus win the confidence of the Samaritan woman?
4. How does the courtesy of Jesus show itself in v. 10, where our Lord suggests the woman's needs?
5. Show how Jesus used courtesy in presenting his arguments. Vs. 20-24.

Practicing Courtesy

1. What value has courtesy in making a life useful?
2. Why is a thoughtful person likely to be a courteous person?
3. Where is the best place to begin the practice of courtesy?
4. Why is it Christlike to show courtesy to foreigners?
5. How may courtesy be practiced in the Church?
6. What effect should the thought that Christ is always our Guest have on our practice of courtesy?

A Possible Project

Let several members write essays on "The Etiquette of Jesus." These essays can be read as part of the devotional service at succeeding meetings of the society.

Topic for September 7, 1924. Faith and a Useful Life. John 4: 46-50

A Faith that Works

1. What caused the nobleman to seek aid of a Nazarene Teacher and Healer?
2. How great was the contrast between a nobleman and a Carpenter?
3. What evidence is there that the nobleman's faith was a growing faith? V. 47.
4. Why is it necessary to have faith in order to see worth-while results?

5. What did the nobleman's faith have to do with the recovery of his son?

A Living Faith

1. Why is faith listed with hope and love?
2. Why is faith necessary in the religious life?
3. Why is faith necessary in business? in scientific research?
4. Why is cold logic inadequate for the fullest life?

A Possible Project

Let the members report on the project suggested on July 6, 1924. Check up on the work done for Negroes and Chinese in your community.

Topic for September 14, 1924. Church Attendance and a Useful Life. Luke 2: 41, 42; 4: 16

Christ at Church

1. What places of worship did Jesus attend?
2. Why did Jesus go to the Temple and to the synagogues? What did he gain there that he could not secure in private devotions?
3. When did Jesus form the habit of church attendance?
4. What does Jesus' church-going habit show in regard to his attitude toward church attendance?

The Church-Going Habit

1. What is the value of the church-going habit?
2. When is the best time to form this habit?
3. Why is it a good thing to reduce to habits the things which help to make life richer?
4. What is the relation of church attendance to spiritual growth?
5. What is the practice of the useful men and women in your community in regard to church attendance?
6. What services in the church should young people attend?

Some Possible Projects

Organize a "Go-to-Church-Band," or plan a church-going contest in the society. Attend the church services regularly.

Topic for September 21, 1924. Medical Missions at Home and Abroad. Mark 1: 40-42

A Leper Cured

1. How numerous were lepers in Palestine in Jesus' day?
2. What was the social status of lepers, then? What is it to-day?
3. How far was medical science advanced two thousand years ago?
4. Why was leprosy so dreaded?
5. Why do we say that Jesus' mission on earth was to give health to the whole man, to the physical as well as to the spiritual nature?

Healing in Jesus' Name

1. What has been done and is being done by Christian missionaries for lepers?
2. What difference has Christ made in the sick room?
3. What part has the Church had in building and maintaining hospitals?
4. To what extent has the Church supported medical missions?
5. What can you say of the opportunity which a medical missionary has to heal the souls as well as the bodies of his patients?
6. Why is medical work an important factor in mission fields?

Suggestions for the Meeting

Secure from the American Mission to Lepers, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, a program for a meeting on Leper missions, and leaflets; also "Without the Camp," a little quarterly magazine costing twenty-five cents a year. Send to the Board of Foreign Missions for the leaflet, "Go and Tell John." Examine also the reports of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the Board of National Missions, which your pastor has.

Topic for September 28, 1924. In His Steps: Helping Others Day by Day. Acts 10: 38; John 2: 9; 3: 5; 4: 50; Mark 1: 40-42

"Doing Good"

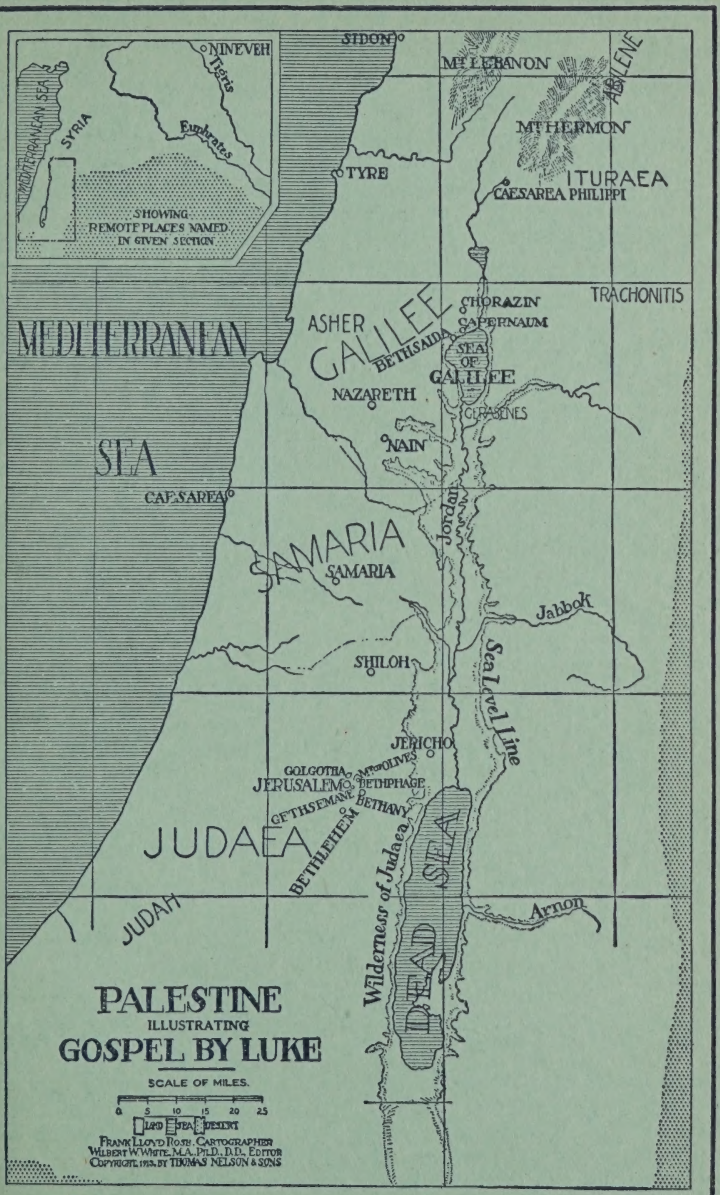
1. Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." How does the opening period of his ministry give proof of this statement?
2. What made Jesus' helpfulness to others different from any ministry before or since?
3. What in Jesus' ministry marks him as the Son of God?
4. Which required the more power—to heal incurable diseases, or to forgive sins? Why do you think so?

Following Him in Service

1. Should we take the ministry of Jesus as our example of a life of service? Why?
2. How can we follow Jesus in service to others day by day?
3. How can we make our conversation more helpful?
4. How can we apportion our time so as to be of more service to others?
5. How can prayer aid us in our service?
6. What value has Bible-reading in a life of service?

A Possible Project

Let each member undertake during the week some new form of service or revive an old form, and report on his experience.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The International Sunday School Lessons

UNIFORM SERIES FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, 1924

Central Period of Christ's Ministry

October 5.—The Choice of the Twelve.
Lesson Material: Matt. 10: 1-8.

October 12.—The Sermon on the Mount.
Lesson Material: Matt., chs. 5 to 7.

October 19.—The Parable of the Sower.
Lesson Material: Mark 4: 1-20.

October 26.—The Stilling of the Storm.
Lesson Material: Mark 4: 35-41.

November 2.—The Prodigal Son. (World's Temperance Sunday.)
Lesson Material: Luke 15: 11-24.

November 9.—The Feeding of the Five Thousand.
Lesson Material: John 6: 1-15.

November 16.—Peter's Confession.
Lesson Material: Matt. 16: 13-20.

November 23.—The Transfiguration.
Lesson Material: Luke 9: 28-36.

November 30.—The Good Samaritan.
Lesson Material: Luke 10: 25-37.

December 7.—The Man Born Blind.
Lesson Material: John, ch. 9.

December 14.—The Raising of Lazarus.
Lesson Material: John 11: 1-44.

December 21.—Christmas Lesson—God's Gift to the World.
Lesson Material: John 1: 14-18; 3: 16-21.

December 28.—Review: Central Period of Christ's Ministry.